Week ending November 5 1955 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

EXTRA: BOOK CONDENSATION

LAND OF THE MOONFLOWER

by Gerald Sparrow

ERIC BARKER'S WITTY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

'APPROACH TO SUNRISE'
by Michael Carlin

The aroma alone is an invitation

What an invitation lies in that rich aroma. An invitation to a perfect pleasure. For that's what Cadbury's Drinking Chocolate is. It's pleasure, pleasure all the way from the first tempting whiff to the last delicious drop. Wonderfully rich. Velvety smooth. Truly chocolaty.

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the luxury evening drink

EDITORIAL

A sad story

IN Kensington there is an empty site. On the South Bank of the Thames there is a bare foundation stone. Farther along the South Bank there is another empty site. And somewhere in the Treasury is a million pounds, voted by Parliament but still unspent.

That, after a century of planning, is how far the British have got with their National Theatre.

It is a curious and sad story. In mid-Victorian times the demand for a national theatre was first expressed. The French had already, after all, had their Comédie Française for approaching two centuries. By 1903 a fund had been launched. Many other countries by then had national theatres, but the British, with the greatest dramatic literature of all, still had none.

BY 1937 the fund was sufficiently large to pay £70,000 for a site in Kensington. The site was still bare by 1949, when the London County Council made an offer, which was accepted, to swap it for another site on the developing South Bank.

MR. IVOR BROWN
"Only a national theatre . . ."

That year, 1949, was one of great hopes. Parliament empowered the Treasury to give £1 million to the cost of building a national theatre. Two years later Queen Elizabeth (now the Queen Mother) laid the theatre's foundation stone. It is still the only piece of building on the site.

Indeed, in 1953 the L.C.C., getting out its five-year plan, offered another swap to a site farther along the South Bank. This is just as good a site as the other, except that it has not even got the foundation stone on it.

NOW an argument has grown up that the Memorial Theatre at Stratford, and the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells in London, are just as good as having a national theatre.

This is a false argument. Stratford presents Shakespeare, the two others mostly put on Shakespeare, foreign drama, music and ballet.

As Mr. Ivor Brown, critic, author and chairman of the British Drama League, says: "Only a national theatre can be expected to have the resources and finance to cover with its productions the whole range of national drama."

That range stretches from Shakespeare through the Restoration dramatists to Pinero, Shaw and the moderns such as Fry and Eliot—the dramatic riches which usually fall between the Old Vic and the commercial stage.

Costs of building the theatre have risen alarmingly since 1949. But there is still that million in the Treasury. And public funds contribute today only just over one farthing a head a year to drama.

Is it not time that the nation with the richest stage heritage in the world got on with its National Theatre?

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FREE SPEECH: 4, 6, 8, 10. THIS WEEK'S COVER: 6. IT'S THE CUSTOM: 42

YES! . . . Discriminating housewives appreciate that 'Ovaltine' Biscuits are ideal for tea-time, 'elevenses' and all occasions.

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FROM ALL GOOD SHOPS

FREE SPEECH

Our hospitals are like barracks

IN my district, the hospitals are so short of nurses that clergymen are appealing from the pulpit for volunteers. Yet when my daughter went to see the matron of a hospital in a nearby town about becoming a nurse, she left feeling most discouraged.

The matron spoke only about strict discipline, and how every probationer must start by spending hours scrubbing and polishing.

An evil genius is brooding over our hospitals—the shadow of Florence Nightingale. In her time, she did more than any other person to reform the hospitals of the British Army. Yet our civilian hospitals today still blindly follow many of her precepts, though times have changed so greatly.

Patients are still being treated as if they were unwashed infantrymen at Scutari. Educated girls are still bullied and supervised, as if they were women of the type that used to act as nurses in the old army hospitals.

Modern British hospitals should be friendly places where nurses are encouraged to feel that they are helping humanity — not menial floor-polishers saving life with a broom.—E. K. H., Windsor, Berkshire.

Music Maker

AT Prinknash Abbey, near my home, one of the monks is building a four hundred-pipe organ. Dom Ethelbert Watson has spent an hour a day for four years on the work. By building the organ himself, he is saving the abbey about £2,000.

Dom Ethelbert at work

The pipes and organ case are made from walnut and pear wood grown in the abbey grounds, and the instrument will have the lovely tone of a seventeenth-century baroque organ.

How pleasant it is to find that people will still take on such mammoth labours of love.—L. VENN, Gloucester.

Back to Work

REMPLOY, the company formed to employ disabled people, is not as helpful as your article suggests (JOHN BULL, October 15). In 1954, Remploy stopped employing new staff, and employees who are away ill for more than six months often find they cannot have their jobs back.—H. BROOM, Leeds, 6.

"We work on a fixed budget," says a Remploy official, "and last year we had to cut staff to keep within our means. Rather than make employees redundant, we decided not to take on new staff until natural wastage brought numbers down. Now, however, the process is complete and we are just starting to employ new people. A man away for six months or so will be struck off the strength so that we can replace him. But he is promised the first suitable vacancy when he is fit."

High Fliers

FLYING at 14,000 feet, I was surprised to meet four wild ducks—or perhaps they were geese. I never expected to find birds at that height. Are there any altitude records for birds?—R. T. C., R.A.F., Kent.

"Birds are often seen as high as 16,000 feet," says the London Zoo. "Even small birds such as swallows fly at that height, to find helpful winds when they are migrating."

Wrong Track

THE world does not owe Britain a high standard of living, and your editorial on the cotton industry (JOHN BULL, October 8) is typical of an unfortunate attitude.

We complain about cheap foreign labour when it hits our industries, but we should complain more loudly if tea prices went up because plantation workers were being paid more.

The answer for our textile towns is to find new industries—and remember that tariffs work both ways.—D. J. BENSON, Grays, Essex.

Boxed In

READING the letter about the purpose of mirrors in telephone boxes ("Free Speech," October 8) reminded me of an incident when I was a telephonist.

I watched an old lady go into the telephone box, opposite the exchange, and answered her request for a number. I told her to put a sixpenny piece and two pennies in the slots. The penny "gong" sounded, and the old lady said: "That's the sixpence."

She was furious when I told her that the coin was a penny, and asked me how I knew. I told her I could see her through the mirror. "Very well, young man," she said, "what am I wearing?"

She was astounded when I described her accurately, but I got the correct coins.—N. APPLEYARD, Workington.

Overtime

WHAT with TV and crowded homes it must be very difficult for modern children to concentrate on their homework. Many years ago I knew a vicar who set aside a room in the vicarage for quiet study by students.

Perhaps parent-teacher associations could arrange a rota of supervisors, who would look after one room at their schools, in the evenings, so that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

A John Bull book condensation complete in this issue

LAND OF THE MOONFLOWER

GERALD SPARROW'S adventures in Siam

begins on page 43

Wolsey take feather-light nylon and warm fleecy wool; knit them into an exclusive mesh fabric. The result is warmth *and* luxury—in fact underwear that will be comfortable all winter long. Superbly tailored, these garments are also extremely durable. Wonderful value, all this!

no better value at any price

15/-

WOLSEY wool and nylon MESH
Available in sleeveless or short sleeve vests and in Trunks or Wolsey X Briefs from Wolsey Stockists throughout the country.

Wolsey mesh in wool and nylon

More and more men are wearing

The MORLEY Shirt

Little wonder that the Morley Shirt is the choice of so many men. It has everything ! High grade Egyptian cotton fully shrunk, gauntlet sleeves for buttons or links, fine pearl buttons, attached collar in two styles.

Colours: white, cream, grey, ecru, blue, green. **25/-**

With trubenised collar **29/6**

Always look for the name **MORLEY**

YES, this is how it starts. It may seem trifling at first. Yet gradually, this 'receding at the temples' becomes more noticeable. Before long, in many cases, hair grows thinner on top also. *Even so, there is still time* —if you give your hair the care it deserves.

a sad story beginning ?

HAIR troubles bring distress to millions. Yet many deliberately ignore the warning signs, pretend to themselves 'it's nothing to worry about.' Then, one day, the first " thin patches " can no longer be hidden.

Hair needs care. Quite simple care too, the most important thing being to feed and stimulate the scalp and hair roots. For this, it is best to use ' PANTENE ', the vitamin hair lotion which is already an outstanding success on the Continent.

By regular use of ' PANTENE ,' scalp irritations and dandruff are relieved, often within a few days. Stronger growth of the hair cannot be hoped for immediately, but persevemnce may bring the richest reward of all. Certainly (provided the hair roots are still capable of life) the hair generally will become fuller and stronger, the " thin patches " not so embarrassingly obvious.

Every morning, ' PANTENE ' enriches scalp and hair roots with that important vitamin of the 'B' complex, Panthenol. Use ' PANTENE ' *regularly*, ask your hairdresser for a 'Pantene' friction.

Price 15/6 a bottle from Chemists and Hairdressers.

'PANTENE'

New Vitamin Hair Tonic

' PANTENE,' new to Britain, is the one hair lotion containing that vitamin of the ' B ' complex, Panthenol, which research has shown to be important for nourishing the scalp and hair.

Sole Distributors: Thos. Christy & Co. Ltd. Aldershot.

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

children could return to study.—MRS. D. G. SPENCER, Stevenage, Herts.

" I have not heard of any such scheme," says an education officer, " But it seems a good idea. Some primary schools organize leisure periods, after school hours, so that children whose mothers go out to work do not run the streets."

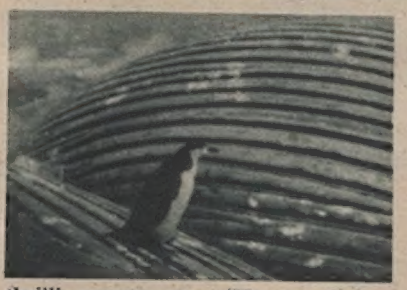
Moonshine

A WOMAN gardener told me that the secret of her success with a vegetable garden was the fact that she sowed root crops when the moon was waning, and surface crops when it was waxing. Do the experts agree? —E. WHITE, Cowes, Isle of Wight.

" Exhaustive tests have been made, but the theory has not been proved," says a gardening expert. " The condition of the soil is more important than the state of the moon. You can't sow successfully when the soil is wet and sticky."

Hitch-hiker

ROSS COCKRILL'S account of whaling with the Southern Venturer, in " Whale Hunt," certainly had its



thrilling moments. He was lucky, however, to have a basket to carry him between the mother ship and the whale catcher. Our method was a foot stirrup, on a precarious rope. No doubt the penguins he met sometimes took a closer look at whaling—like this hitch-hiker we found riding on a whale we had in tow.—G. SMITH, London, E.17.

New Eyes

DON EVERITT'S fascinating story of a corneal grafting operation (JOHN BULL, October 1) must have made many readers suddenly thankful for their eyesight.

I now feel that I should like to bequeath my eyes to someone who may need them. How do I go about it?—MRS. J. T., Worcester.

Doctors and hospitals all over the country will make arrangements for the nearest Eye Bank to remove the useful portions of a person's eyes within ten hours of death. The operation is not disfiguring. The donor should give his or her next of kin and executor copies of a note with the name and address and the request that " after death my eyes shall be used for therapeutic purposes."

Save On Schooling

EDUCATION costs the country a lot of money. The schools are overcrowded, classes are too large and teachers too few. So why not raise the school entrance age to six, as in most western European countries, and lower the leaving age to fourteen?

Children younger than six are better and healthier at home, and the raising of the leaving age to fifteen was always a doubtful benefit. The majority of these older children would be better at work—they resent being treated as " schoolkids."

Such a move would help to solve the manpower problem, would boost family incomes, allow mothers to stop work earlier, and would cut the cost of family allowances.—W. A., Essex.

Rotten Shame

IN South Africa, the Italian borer beetle is causing so much destruction in the timber of houses that it is now compulsory to treat all wood before property is sold. In Britain, dry rot is an insidious destroyer of timber in buildings. Compulsory pre-treatment in this country would save a lot of heartache, labour and expense.—M. SCREEN, Blackheath, Birmingham.

" A properly designed, built and maintained house should not get dry rot," says a timber expert. " But the rot does too frequently occur, and to insure a house against fungal and insect attack, pressure treatment of all timber used, at a cost of between £15 and £22, on average, is necessary. Trouble usually starts in damp places without adequate ventilation."

Gutter Snipes

MR. STAMP is quite correct about the danger from professional drivers (" Free Speech," October 1). Regularly coaches travel from Oxford to London in two hours at an average speed of 32 m.p.h.; and the behaviour of London taxi-drivers is appalling. They defy every rule of the highway —and expect others to do so. I have

been hooted for not starting from lights at amber.—B. GABLE, Chelsea, London, S.W.10.

. . . I have been driving for more than sixteen years, and think that the long-distance lorry driver is the true " knight of the road." He meets courtesy with courtesy — but Mr. Stamp should not make a habit of cruising behind heavy vehicles, because their rear view is restricted. I wonder how many private drivers would hold themselves in check, if they had the power of a commercial lorry under their bonnets? — R. MCCARTHY, Wollaton, Nottingham.

. . . Many lorry drivers don't seem to notice cyclists, leaving them only the gutter; buses overtake within yards of a stop and then pull in. But many private drivers are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

THIS WEEK'S COVER

AT THE THEATRE, the poignant little curtain-raiser in the foyer often has more drama than the play on-stage. It opens with a crowded scene and a confident hero, drags on through a lonely, despairing vigil, and ends with the flamboyant entry of the heroine wearing a disarming smile and a prettiness that defies reproach. Women being women, the situation is inevitable. And the harassed hero has to admire that intuitive talent for being just late enough to make an effect, just in time to collect a be-ribboned box of chocolates and avoid stormy indignation. "There's no answer," says Zelinski. "Except plays that don't start until the second act."

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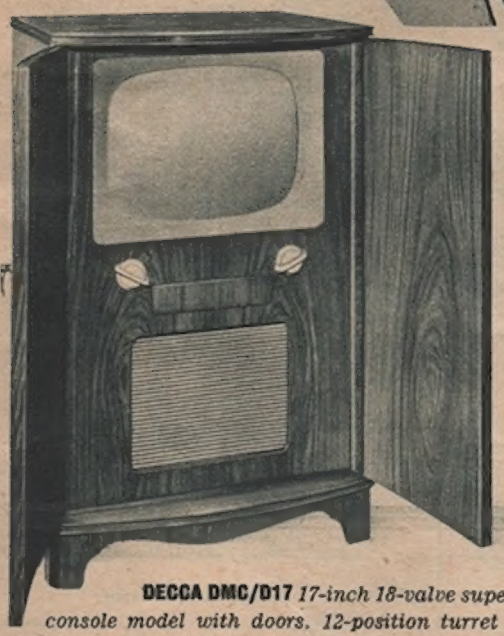

DECCA DMC/D17 *17-inch 18-valve superheterodyne console model with doors. 12-position turret tuning and automatic anti-fade control. 10-inch speaker. Finished in walnut. For AC mains, 200/250v. 50 c/s., or DC mains, 200/250v.:* **102 GNS.** *Tax paid. Also* **DMC/D18** *with V.H.F.-F.M. radio:* **108 GNS.** *Tax paid.*

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14-inch tube. 12-position turret tuning. 18-valve superheterodyne. Automatic anti-fade control. 6-inch speaker. Cabinet finished in walnut. For AC mains 200/250v. 50 c/s. or DC mains 200/250v.: **87 GNS.** *Tax paid.*
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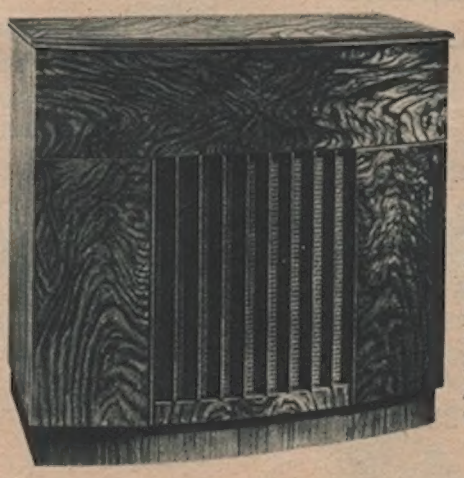

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FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

just as bad—everyone on the road should be regarded as a maniac.—P. M. CHARLTON, Morden, Surrey.

Brave Memories

COLONEL 'MIKE' ANSELL, the "Horse Showman" (JOHN BULL, October 8), certainly left his mark on the "Lothians."

I was his troop sergeant in France in 1940. When he arrived, we wondered what had hit us. We cursed him at first—but how we blessed him when the going was tough!

He made us into a tank regiment second to none—the first Royal Armoured Corps regiment to go into action, and the last to pull out. At St. Valery, when they took a roll call, only three officers and seventeen other ranks remained. "Colonel Mike" was not among them.—D. ARBUTHNOTT, Edinburgh, 6.

Monumental

WE STILL tolerate an old-fashioned Victorian kitchen range in our otherwise surprisingly modern house, but have been looking forward to replacing it with a modern fireplace. Imagine our surprise when some

American relatives clustered round the old range and went into raptures over it.

Now we are wondering if we ought to have it scheduled as an ancient monument, and charge for viewing.—H. COCKINS, Salford, 6.

Spirit Levellers

CHINESE mourners pass the bodies of dead relatives through upstairs windows ("Free Speech," October 8) to give evil spirits the slip. The attending spirits are supposed to fall to destruction.

Bamboo bridges often zig-zag across streams so that the spirits will fall into the water, and I have seen Chinese people deliberately walk across the path of cars and lorries. The jay-walkers hope that their spirits will become road casualties.—S. LACEY, Winchcomb Road, Norwich.

Proud Insult

THANK you for the exciting book condensation, *The Navy's Here!* (JOHN BULL, October 1).

I remember the big headlines in the Norwegian papers in 1940 when the Altmark sailed along our coast and ended up in Jössing fjord.

"Jössing" soon afterwards became a nickname for anyone who was against the Germans. The quislings first used the word as an insult, but very soon every good Norwegian was proud to be dubbed a Jössing.—HENNING PETTER ENGEN, Bergen, Norway.

Value For Money

THERE are many injustices in the heavy burden of road charges ("Free Speech," October 1). A friend bought his house for £1,900 on a mortgage which he pays back at £9 a month. Rateable value is £15. Now he is compelled to pay almost £200 towards the cost of road-making.

My friend and his wife both have to work hard to keep going. A few hundred yards away, council tenants pay thirty shillings a week for their flats, and this includes constant hot water. The road will be used equally by these people, who don't have to pay a cent towards it.—E. D., County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

. . . What other business could demand and receive payment for services actually not performed? I refer

Continued on page 10

SENIOR SERVICE
Satisfy
20 CIGARETTES
SENIOR SERVICE
The Perfection of Cigarette Luxury

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is the short cut to long-term enjoyment . . .

When all's said and done, the two most important things to look for in television are a clear picture and reliable performance. Your dealer will tell you that Bush sets have a record second-to-none for trouble-free performance; shoals of letters *we* receive from Bush owners tell the same story. Not for nothing is reliability the symbol of Bush! It is part and parcel of every Bush set and underlies every Bush advance—of which 'Telepic', the exclusive Bush method of switching to the I.T.A. Programmes, is the most recent example. Make no mistake, the name of Bush is a short-cut to long-term enjoyment. Ask your Bush dealer to show you the latest Bush models.

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Hæmorrhoids

a new way to relieve the pain

this tablet and a glass of water are all you need

Here is an entirely new remedy for relieving the pain and discomfort of hæmorrhoids. Hemotabs are tablets you take with a glass of water—as you would an aspirin.

Hemotabs not only bring soothing relief from the pain and distress, but, acting inside the body, they reduce the swellings and promote healing. In addition, Hemotabs are mildly laxative, and help to restore normal actions, so important for full recovery and long-lasting freedom from pain. Hemotabs cost only 2/6. Available from all chemists.

HEMOTABS

Manufactured by
E. Griffiths Hughes Limited, Manchester

7 days ago she had spotty skin

Amazing new white balm clears spots and pimples

WHAT a picture this happy couple make! Yet only a few days ago this radiant bride was worried by horribly spotty skin.

Then she tried Valderma Balm three times a day. In a few days her skin grew clear and healthy. On the Great Day she never looked better!

TWO ANTISEPTICS

No single antiseptic could possibly kill all the germs causing skin troubles. That's why Valderma contains *two* antiseptics which penetrate deep into the pores and kill off these germs. Its special 'emulsified' base allows septic matter to escape. Eczema, spots, pimples and rashes are quickly relieved.

Valderma Balm is sold at all chemists: Tubes 1s. 10½d., Jars 2s. 4½d. Free trial tube: send a 2½d. stamp for postage, etc., to Dept. J.B.6, Valderma Laboratories, 17, Berners St., London, W.1.

(436A)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

to councils' attitudes towards "unadopted" roads. Tenants pay rates for the upkeep of roads in the area, yet their own road is neither surfaced nor even cleaned by the local authority. — S. SILVESTER, Codsall, Wolverhampton.

"Property in unadopted roads is usually assessed at a smaller rate," says the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. "And, of course, rates go to pay for other amenities, not only roads."

Mixed Up

AMERICAN education experts are certainly convinced that co-education works (JOHN BULL, October 1).

To quarantine schoolchildren according to sex only makes the "battle of the sexes" inevitable. It is the Victorian attitude to sex separation in childhood that breeds misfits, neurotics and perverts.

Occasionally we hear of some incident of sexual precocity at a co-educational school, but healthier and more natural relations are the usual result.—LEW ARTHUR, New York.

. . . There was no mention of Scotland in your editorial, yet co-education is the general policy here. It's so much the accepted rule that we don't call it a "policy" any more. Jack Longland, Derby's education officer, should come to Scotland if he "doesn't know enough about co-education."—M. D. HENRY, West Bay, Dunoon, Argyll.

Begins in John Bull next week

FRENCH LEAVE

a carefree new novel by P. G. WODEHOUSE

(*see page* 19)

Private Eye

JUST before I read "Rose Of Sharon" (JOHN BULL, September 24) I had sold a horse. The story made me so uneasy about its welfare that I went to check up. Fortunately, it was being well looked after.

The R.S.P.C.A. man in the story brought home to me, once again, how much more useful Society inspectors would be out of uniform.—MRS. M. HALSLY, Crabble Hill, Dover.

"When there is detective work to do, our inspectors do not wear uniform," says the R.S.P.C.A. "But at markets, the uniform has a salutary effect."

Heated Words

IT was I and not Canon Green who, as related in "Canon In The Bull Ring" (JOHN BULL, September 24), used strong language to the hose-happy firemen when Holy Trinity Church, in Brompton, was hit by an incendiary bomb. Then, as now, I was director of music at the church, serving with the Royal Signals in the Brompton Road. The canon and myself climbed into the roof and put out the fire with a stirrup pump. But it might have been worse. On another occasion the memorial hall, next door, was totally demolished by a land mine.—F. E. WOODHOUSE, London, W.2.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

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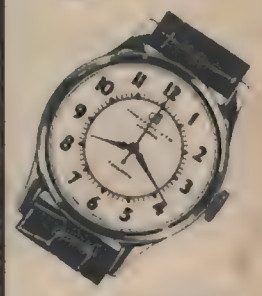

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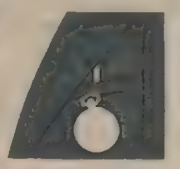

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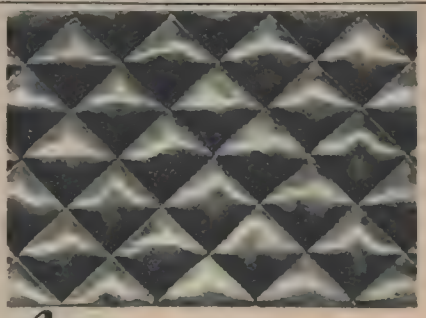

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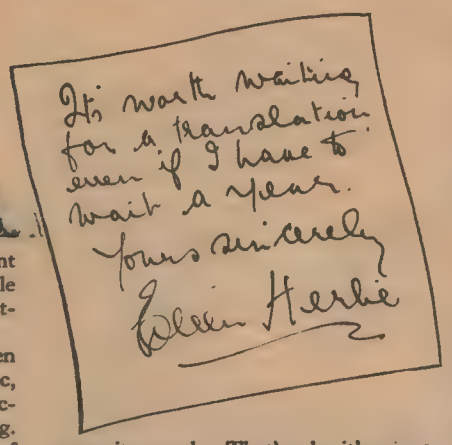
LETTERS OF CONSEQUENCE

"I was willing to wait a year"

says

EILEEN HERLIE



"ONE LETTER I wrote was so important that it really did change my whole life," says Eileen Herlie, star of the West-end comedy "The Matchmaker."

"I had been trying to decide between various scripts for a season at the Lyric, Hammersmith. I wasn't a well-known actress then—this was to be a beginning. One script was a very rough translation of a French play. I knew straight away that this was the play for me. I replied saying I'd wait a year for a proper translation if need be."

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Mr. Morgan's happy day

by ***DUDLEY BARKER***

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN HESELTINE

Other men married and had children. Not ambitious, hard working and successful Henry. . . . Then Rosemary began to change his ideas

AS HENRY MORGAN, on his customary morning inspection of the stores, came down the main staircase to ground-floor level—domestic hardware, soft furnishings, lingerie, stationery and fancy goods—there was a commotion going on just inside the entrance door.

A middle-aged woman customer was raising her voice and gesturing, while several embarrassed shopgirls stood around. Henry saw that Mrs. Roberts, the store detective, was talking patiently, persistently, firmly to the woman.

Looking across the store, Mrs. Roberts saw him, and nodded. Henry sighed. This was a part of his job that he hated; it upset him. And he resented that it should happen on this day of all days. Everything should be happy today.

However, no help for it. He turned abruptly towards the lift and told the girl to take him up to the offices, top floor. She smiled at him. She was a little blonde—brassy, provocative. He had seen her every day for a year or so and had never noticed her before. Though he was a man living in a world of women, he had never much looked at them. Too busy.

But today was different. He smiled gently at the liftgirl.

When he got to his office, with the broad windows overlooking the London rooftops to the park beyond, he sat in the leather chair behind his big flat mahogany desk and Miss Jules, his secretary, came quietly in.

"Hold everybody off for a while, Miss Jules," he instructed. "Mrs. Roberts has caught a shoplifter. She'll be bringing her up in a moment."

"Oh, what a nuisance for you," sympathized Miss Jules, and went out.

Henry, waiting at his desk, gazed at the door after her, speculatively. Not a bad-looking girl, Miss Jules. Then he laughed quietly to himself. Girl? She must, he supposed, be in her thirties.

She had been with him for nearly ten years, always there, always efficient, never obtruding. He began to wonder idly what her life was really like, and realized that he knew practically nothing about her.

Once a year, at the staff ball, he dutifully took the floor with her. That was their only intimacy. He could not even remember her first name. Sophie was it, or Sheila? He rather thought it was Sheila.

There was a gentle tap on his door and Mrs. Roberts came apologetically in.

"The usual trouble?" he asked. "Is there any doubt?"

"Not really, sir. I had been watching her for about half an hour. It was in the lingerie. She has a shopping bag, and I'm sure she has at least three things in it. I saw her finally pick up a nylon petticoat. Then she sauntered off

"Rosemary!" Henry Morgan cried. "How you've grown. I didn't recognize you." He was startled at the strange direction his thoughts were taking

to the door and I stopped her. She's making the usual protests."

"Angry innocence?" he asked. "Just wanting to see the colour in the daylight?"

Mrs. Roberts allowed herself a thin smile. She had, Henry realized, a rather attractive smile. He wondered who Mr. Roberts was, and what he did, and whether he was still in love with her. Not much of a chap, thought Henry, to let his wife go out to work. If he, Henry, ever married—and the thought hummed pleasingly—his wife would never work.

"That's it, sir," Mrs. Roberts agreed.

"Is she well-off? She looks well-off."

"I expect so. She gives a Knightsbridge address, and says her husband's an important man, and he'll give us what for."

"Ah well," sighed Henry, "bring her in. By the way, what's her name?"

"Mrs. Bruce, she says."

WHILE he was waiting for the woman to be brought in, Henry said firmly to himself, I must not get worked up about it. It is all quite unimportant to me, especially today. Because today Rosemary is coming home.

Mrs. Bruce swept angrily into his office, with Mrs. Roberts fadingly in the background. In one hand Mrs. Bruce grasped a nylon petticoat, in the other a shopping bag. She flung the petticoat on to his desk and demanded, "Are you the manager? Is this how you treat your customers? I have never been so insulted in my life. When my husband hears of this, you'll regret it. I suppose you realize you are in for very heavy damages?"

"Suppose you take a seat, and we'll talk it over quietly," said Henry wearily.

Mrs. Bruce hesitated, then sat down.

"Now, Mrs. Roberts," said Henry.

Mrs. Roberts monotonously recited what she had seen. Mrs. Bruce fumed. "A farrago of lies," she burst out.

"But, madam," Henry pointed out, "you were walking out of the store with this petticoat in your hand, and you had not paid for it."

"I was taking it to the door to see the colour in daylight."

"And the other things that this lady says she saw you put into your shopping bag?"

"Not a word of truth in it."

Henry sighed. "There has perhaps been a misunderstanding. If so, we can clear it up straight away. If you would be so kind as to empty the contents of your shopping bag. . . ."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," replied Mrs. Bruce. "The very suggestion is an insult."

"Very well. Mrs. Roberts, please ask Miss Jules to get the police on the phone."

Mrs. Roberts nodded and went out. Henry watched the woman, the fear crossing behind her eyes. For a few moments she struggled to keep up the pretence. Then she began to sob. "Please don't call the police. I'm sorry. I don't know what made me do it, I must have been mad. I will pay. Please, please," she begged, "stop your girl calling the police."

Henry pressed the buzzer for Miss Jules. "Defer that call, Miss Jules, and ask Mrs. Roberts to come back."

Under Henry's guidance, Mrs. Bruce picked up her shopping bag and emptied it hesitantly on to his desk. Several pieces of lingerie toppled out, crumpled; all youthful, pretty, frilly; all pathetic, lying there on his desk, with the middle-aged woman staring at them, the tears and mascara staining under her eyes, and her hat a little askew. The underclothes would not even fit her, thought Henry, with a quick professional glance at Mrs. Bruce's figure. They were things for a girl in her twenties. A girl in her twenties! His thoughts wandered pleasantly off towards Rosemary, but he sharply recalled them.

"You spoke of your husband," he said. "Would you like me to telephone him?"

The woman wept again. "Does he have to

know? It will kill him. Let me pay for the things. Let me pay, and go."

"You must realize I can't do that, madam. Tell me where I can phone your husband."

She told him and then, with a little choking sound, fainted. Henry hastened round his desk and, with Mrs. Roberts, lifted her into a chair. She was heavy and flabby, and her hat fell off.

Miss Jules came efficiently in with a glass of water and a smelling bottle. When the woman came round, moaning, Henry told Mrs. Roberts to put her into the ladies' rest room and make her lie down. With a feeling of relief that his office was cleared of her, he told Miss Jules to telephone the husband and ask him to come to the store. "Don't tell him what has happened. Say his wife is here, unwell. When he arrives, show him straight in to me."

Miss Jules hesitated.

"Well, what is it?" he asked her.

"I just can't help feeling sorry for her," said Miss Jules, "Poor thing, she seems so. . . ."

"We must keep personal feelings separate from business, Miss Jules," said Henry primly.

He set to work methodically and swiftly, putting all other thoughts from his mind. Work was his strength. Other men had outside interests, but not Henry Morgan. The subtleties of buying and selling, the intricate management of the community which made up the staff of the store—these had been life enough for Henry. Until recently.

But he must not think of Rosemary now. He was at work.

Half an hour later the woman's husband had arrived. He was handsome, grey-haired, an obviously successful man of business. Henry placed his tailor at a glance, and noticed that his shoes were hand-made. Good. He could talk sensibly to a man like this.

"I am told that my wife has been taken ill," said Mr. Bruce, "Please tell me at once what has happened. And where is she?"

"She is lying down in the ladies' rest room," said Henry, "and is being well looked after. Take a seat, won't you, please? You must prepare for something of a shock." Then he told him. The man looked amazed, then indignant, and at last he sank his head into his hands.

"You mean to prosecute?"

"What else can I do?" asked Henry uncomfortably. "Put yourself in my position. I don't know what your line is. . . ."

"Shipping."

"Then I daresay that you suffer, as we do, from depredations. If you catch the—er, person concerned, what do you do? You prosecute."

THE other nodded, his face drawn. "But this is my wife," he said desperately. "I can't believe it. She lacks nothing, she wants for nothing. It must be some sort of breakdown. We have children—grown-up, married, with children of their own. We live a happy family life. It baffles me. . . . Mr. Morgan, for pity's sake."

"Every year," said Henry, "our losses from theft amount to several thousand pounds. Of all my duties, this is the one I most detest, Mr. Bruce. But what else can I do?"

The man got up. "Give me a little time. I must consult my lawyer, my doctor. Give me a little time. May I go and see my wife?"

"Of course," said Henry, ringing for Miss Jules. The husband followed her out, his shoulders sagging.

What hazards there are, thought Henry, in marriage, children, domestic life. And yet he felt a curious, sneaking envy of the man who had just gone out. This was disaster, but he must also have known joys.

Henry glanced at his watch and made a sudden decision. He urgently wanted to see Rosemary, though he was not quite sure why. He was to have met her for lunch. Instead, he would meet her off the train. He rang again for Miss Jules, told her he was going out and would not be back until the afternoon.

"What about these people?" asked Miss Jules.

"They'll have to wait. See that some food is sent in to them, and tell them I had to go out."

Miss Jules braced her courage. "Do we have to prosecute?" she asked. "They are so pitiful."

"We deal in drapery, Miss Jules," replied Henry, "not pity."

He was sorry for that chap, he told himself, as he made for the lift, but as for the sentimental attitude that Miss Jules was taking. . . .

As he rode in a taxi to the station, he told himself that he was going to see Rosemary. He tasted the pleasure of the thought, and let his memory wander back to other times he had seen Rosemary.

The first time, she had been in her christening robes. Henry smiled wryly at the recollection. There was Tom Higgs, her father, and the girl he had so rashly, in Henry's opinion, married. Henry privately congratulated himself that he had no such entanglement.

The two of them had started level, Henry in drapery, Tom in a dried-fruit importer's in the City. It was, indeed, in the Bayswater lodging house where each had a room that they first met and became friends, confiding their ambitions of wealth and success to each other.

Henry had stuck to his, moving steadily upwards, studying at nights and weekends; even his holidays, for years now, he had spent at trade conventions which were always thoughtfully arranged at seaside resorts. And there was his solid success as reward—managing director at forty-five, and private investments of a little more than £30,000.

It was a different story with Tom. He had been forced to retreat with his young wife to a small house in an outer suburb. All his life Tom was struggling to meet expenses. When his one chance came of a gamble with his career that might have put him at the top, Tom had not dared to take it.

"I can't risk it," he told Henry, "with the responsibility of May and Rosemary on my hands. Family man, you know."

So Tom was still a respected, overworked, underpaid employee. On the ever fewer occasions when Henry went out for a meal to Tom's home, it seemed to him that Tom looked older and more tired, and that May, who had put on a lot of weight, grew more envious of other men's success.

But of course, as Henry saw, there was the compensation of Rosemary. First a little girl with pigtails, then a scraggy schoolgirl who called him "Uncle Henry."

They remained friends, he and Tom, but they saw less and less of each other. Henry had not been out there for four or five years, he realized with a slight sense of guilt, when Tom rang him up one day and asked a favour.

"It's Rosemary," said Tom. "She has got some silly idea in her head that she wants to be

Tom chuckled as Rosemary went by smiling. He said to Henry, "That lad she's dancing with is her special. Nice young fellow"

"Do you have to go to lunch with that old fogy?" Bill asked .and Henry heard Rosemary reply : "He's such an old sweetie, I can't let him down"

a fashion model. You know what girls are. Well, that sort of thing's in your line, so I wondered if she could come and have a chat with you."

"Of course," replied Henry. "But she's a bit young, isn't she, to be doing that?"

"She's twenty-one next week," said Tom.

"Good heavens," said Henry. "It seems only yesterday I was tipping her half a crown to buy ice cream. You've ruined my day, Tom. I feel an old fogy."

He had forgotten all about it when, a couple of days later, a girl walked unannounced into his office. Henry glanced up, annoyed.

"You must see my secretary in the next room," he began, and then his voice tailed off. She was radiant. He could not quite have said why. The costume she was wearing was a cheap, mass-produced thing, a line he had been offered some months earlier and had rejected. The little hat that clung so enchantingly to her hair was obviously 12s. 6d. in the sale, her shoes had bows on, and her handbag was plastic, retailing at 15s. 11d. Any other girl would have looked tawdry in that get-up. This one looked like the freshness of a morning in early spring.

Henry, getting automatically to his feet, was startled at the direction his thoughts were taking. He said, "Er, what can I do for you?"

"Weren't you expecting me, Uncle Henry?" she asked.

"Great heavens—Rosemary! My goodness, how you've grown. I didn't recognize you."

He came round his desk, holding a hand out to her and settling her in the leather armchair. She smiled up at him and they began to talk. Yes, of course Henry would help her to become a fashion model if she wanted, though it wasn't really the glamorous sort of life some people thought. She chatted gaily and freely to him, though he scarcely knew what the conversation was about, for his thoughts were soaring off in the most unexpected and daring fashion.

"I say," he said suddenly, "it's your twenty-first birthday this week, isn't it? May I send you a present?"

Rosemary grinned. "Rather!"

What should he send? Words like diamonds and mink raced through his mind, but he dismissed them as ridiculous. Then it came to him.

"May I send you an evening dress to wear at your party?"

"I'd love it."

"It shall arrive tomorrow," he promised; and then, seeing a question in her eyes, "Don't worry about it fitting. It will. I'm an old draper, you know. I have experience of these things."

"You're a sweet uncle."

"There are two conditions," he added with mock gravity. "One is that I can come to the party to see you wearing it."

"But of course."

"The other is that you stop calling me uncle."

Rosemary laughed. "Okay, Henry," she said.

When she had gone, he rang excitedly for Miss Jules and told her to send the model buyer up instantly. To the model buyer he explained what he wanted. The model buyer nodded.

Henry was annoyed with himself for the thought that, at any rate, he got it wholesale.

When he went to the party, which was held in a hired hall in the suburb, with a hired band

and a hired caterer, the dress was a success. Even Rosemary's mother, May, who had not in the past been taken much with Henry, warmed to him. Tom, of course, was downright glad to see his old friend; as the evening proceeded, Tom was also very slightly drunk.

This, thought Henry, was the culmination of Tom's life—a twenty-first birthday dance for his daughter. All the struggles and little economies led up, at last, to this.

Henry felt glad he had not married young and wasted his life in a struggle for family security. If he were to marry now it would be a very different matter. He could offer a girl the sort of life any girl would be glad to take. At this point he realized, with a twinge of alarm, that he was gazing fixedly at Rosemary.

SHE was dancing, at that moment, with a tall young man, over-handsome, Henry thought, just a touch of spiv. As they went past, Rosemary saw him and smiled.

"Isn't she a picture?" asked Tom sentimentally, sitting beside Henry.

"She does you great credit," agreed Henry. "You'll have to watch out for the boys, Tom."

Tom chuckled. "You're right there. Bees round the honeypot. Bill Trevor—that lad she's dancing with now—he's her special at the moment. Nice young fellow. Comes of a good family, pots of money—Trevors the timber people, you know. Confidentially, I wouldn't mind if, in a year or so, those two made a match of it. But there, I don't suppose she's serious, not at her age."

Suddenly she came across and asked Henry, "Aren't you going to dance with me?"

"I'm not much good at it," protested Henry.

"Nonsense," she replied.

And there was Henry, pacing rather stiffly around, with Rosemary clinging lightly to him, tilting her head back to look up at him, and chatter, and laugh gaily.

Henry found himself crowing. He told himself that she was merely saying thank you, in a charming way, for the dress. But he refused to believe himself.

During the next few months he saw Rosemary with increasing frequency. At first there was the excuse of introducing her into a mannequin parade. Then, quite naturally, he bought her lunch. At lunch, there was the suggestion of a theatre. Of course she would love to go with him.

Afterwards he took her to supper at a place where they danced. She was enchanting. She patiently, and discreetly, taught him some dance steps, laughing gaily, leaning against him, so fresh and young. When he drove her home, she said: "Wonderful evening. You are a darling," and kissed him. It was only a light-hearted kiss, but Henry could scarcely see to drive his car back to his lonely old house in Kensington.

He was uneasily aware that, as his outings with Rosemary continued, Tom and May must be wondering. So, when she invited him home for tea one Sunday, he went with some embarrassment and a determinedly avuncular manner. Luckily there were heaps of people there, most of them young, chattering and shrieking and exchanging suburban gossip. Henry found Tom as affable as ever, but in May he detected a hidden hostility. He kept wisely among the older people, and got no more than passing smiles and cheerful shouts from Rosemary.

"Where's Bill?" asked her mother.

"Oh, he'll be along."

"Bill Trevor," said May pointedly to Henry, "is Rosemary's boy friend of the moment. Of course, she has crowds of young men, but I have a feeling that this time it's serious. Have you met Bill? He's charming. And so suitable."

Henry left the party as soon as he could, but he managed a moment with Rosemary to remind her that they were dining on Tuesday evening.

"Darling, I'm looking forward to it so much," she said.

Tuesday was a special evening because, on the Wednesday, Rosemary was off for a fortnight's holiday with a girl friend who lived in Paris. Henry had decided to be very careful about Tuesday. He needed the fortnight's respite to think things over calmly.

They dined and danced in one of the big hotels. Henry's dancing had by now sufficiently improved for them both to be able to enjoy the pleasure of it. Rosemary seemed to Henry to be clinging to him a little more closely than usual, and her face was calm and serious. This discovery so enraptured him that he had a wild impulse to chance everything on the moment and ask her to marry him. But he restrained himself. All he permitted himself was to ask her, a little significantly perhaps, whether she would lunch with him on the very day she got back to England.

"I'd love to, Henry," she replied. He thought, from her tone, that she understood what was in his mind.

So now here was Henry, heading towards the station where her train was just about due. He had had his fortnight's consideration. He had been through, with himself, all the arguments—the disparity in their ages, his own ways, the disturbance he was proposing to his successful life, the frowns of May and the probable astonishment of Tom. He had argued back and forth, but it was no good. For the truth was he was wildly in love with Rosemary, as passionately, and as desperately, romantically in love with her as any callow youth mooning over his first girl. He was in for it, and in for it that very day, at lunch.

When he reached the station the train had just arrived and the passengers were being disgorged. He searched for her among the crowds and failed to see her. He stood in dismay near a pillar. She must be on the train. He gazed unhappily around and then suddenly he saw her, just the other side of the pillar in a new hat which proclaimed she had been to Paris.

His heart leaped and he was about to call her name joyfully when a young man came rushing up to her. She flung her arms round him and kissed him—not at all light-heartedly. "Bill darling," Henry heard her say. "How I've missed you!"

AFTER he had kissed her again, Bill Trevor said: "Do you really have to go to lunch with that old fogy? Cut it, and come with me."

"Oh, darling, I can't," Henry heard her reply. "He's such an old sweetie, I can't let him down."

Henry turned away, keeping carefully behind the pillar, and left the platform. He went to the restaurant where they were to lunch, and waited, not sure whether she would come. But she did. She wafted in, only five minutes late, looking, in her new little hat from Paris, adorable. Henry groaned within himself as he got to his feet to welcome her.

"Darling Henry," she said. "Oh, what a wonderful time I've had. And oh, how nice to see you again."

He ordered the food. He had planned to make a little joke with the waiter about trying to outrival the Paris restaurants to which she was now accustomed, but now it seemed pointless, so he just ordered the food.

After a time, Rosemary noticed that he was not saying much. "Have you got a headache or something?" she asked solicitiously.

"No, no," replied Henry, and then, searching round for an excuse, "I had rather an unpleasant morning at the stores."

He told her about the shoplifter. "It often happens," he said, "but I never get reconciled to it. So unpleasant."

Rosemary sympathized. "How old was the woman?"

"About forty-five to fifty, I should think."

Rosemary nodded with all the sagacity of the young. "Ah! People of that age often go a

Continued on page 42

A gay new novel by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

FOR over a generation, the name Wodehouse has been a synonym for laughter. Wodehouse has added much to the world's gaiety with his stories and musical comedies.

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French Leave is superb vintage Wodehouse—romantic, gay, and full of inspired lunacy. It begins

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD: Economic revolution is changing the face of the Arab world. Behind it lies the mighty force of oil

Riches by pipeline

by HARRY HOPKINS

The bazaars of Aleppo, twelve miles of narrow covered passage-ways, presented to Hopkins an Arabian Nights vision of dazzling opulence

FOR ME, ON THIS JOURNEY, the Arab world began in Turkey. We saw the first black tents, stretching like bats' wings across an arid hillside, as we sped southwards towards Iskanderon. The desert came up to meet us and in the villages the houses were long and low. Sometimes their mud walls would be plastered with neat rows of flat round dung-cakes, the household fuel, drying in the sun. When we stopped at a coffee stall I saw that the faces of the people, too, had changed and that now they had Arab noses and big liquid Arab eyes.

Over the coastal range, in Iskanderon itself, the sense of change was strengthened. The stolidity of Anatolia melted; there was a new excitement in the air, a new note of importunity in the twang-twang of the gharry bells. Women wore bright silks with silver filigree belts at their waists; the shopkeepers came out on to their steps and assailed the passer-by; and everywhere there were small Arab shoeshine boys with brilliant, ingratiating smiles.

Standing on the Iskanderon waterfront, with the Mediterranean lapping softly on the sand below, I was conscious of the vastness of the world I was about to enter, a world that stretched eastwards 1,400 miles to Oman at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, that reached out 2,300 miles westwards to the gates of the Atlantic, and, in between, embraced some 65 million people, of complex racial origins, divided by many political boundaries, yet all bound together by the supple bonds of the Arabic tongue, by the austere beauty of the Koran, and, sometimes, more obscurely, by the faint echoes of a brilliant Arab civilization that fell centuries ago into darkness and squalor.

Over this critical area, linking Europe and Asia, the Turks have today constructed a stout roof, soundly secured by the strong cement of national solidarity. But the Turkish roof is only as good as its Arab walls beneath. For years those walls have been shored up by the Western European powers. But now a new era is opening. In 1946 the French left Syria and Lebanon. This spring the British handed over their air bases in Iraq to the Iraqis. Next year the last British soldier will leave the Canal Zone in Egypt. Of the old order, only the small (but efficient and mechanized) British-subsidized Arab Legion remains. And that is being turned over, slowly but steadily, to Jordanian officers.

The props are being withdrawn. A "power vacuum" has come into existence in this key strategic area, which Ernest Bevin in 1946 spoke of as our jugular vein. For, jealous of their new status, suspicious like newly free nations everywhere of "imperialistic designs," the Arab states, save for Iraq and Jordan, refuse all alliances outside their own ranks.

But vacuums are notoriously precarious.

Britain, which has made this area her special concern since the decay of the Ottoman empire, watches with trepidation the first steps of the nascent states—and offers unwanted advice.

The United States, a postwar arrival on the scene, backs her great oil companies, holds out her Point Four dollars, and promises more—at a price.

Now, in October, 1955, to the consternation of the West, Russia, offering arms and financial aid to Egypt, emerges as a rival contender for

The last welding operations on the Kirkuk-Banias pipeline. More than half the world's proved oil resources lie in the Arab countries of the Middle East

New streets in Sidon. In a few years, the ancient Biblical city has been transformed by the fruits of the great oil boom

this much-sought-after position of Middle Eastern fairy godmother. Russia's drive towards warm-water ports is as firmly rooted in history as Britain's concern with the Commonwealth's lifeline.

Will it prove that the Western props have been withdrawn from the Arab walls only to be replaced by Soviet props? Will the walls themselves collapse under the thrust of rival power blocs? Or might they perhaps develop a new strength in independence as the Arab states exact aid from both sides—on their own terms? It is one of the great questions on which hinge the peace and progress of our world.

I travelled from Iskanderon in Turkey to Aleppo, the chief town of Northern Syria, by that handy and economical vehicle of all work in these parts, the *dolmus* or shared taxi. My companions were two young French students returning home to Aleppo after spending their holidays touring the archaeological sites of Turkey. And now, as the big American taxi rushed southwards, their zeal was still unabated. They held cameras out of windows to photograph the ruined arches of an ancient Byzantine church; and as we drew nearer to Aleppo they excitedly pointed out to me the Roman road from Antioch, running off across the plain, its paving stones perfect and still in position just as in Roman days.

As we travelled on across this great northern plain, the growing wheat, mile after mile of it, rippled in the wind like a vast inland sea. The ploughed earth, where it could be seen, was a rich warm russet colour. It was not hard to believe, as this picture of fertility and plenty unrolled before us, that—as Gibbon said—Syria had been the granary of the Roman Empire.

"Yes," said the French boys, "*mais, voyez,* it is now the season. The rains have passed. Come back here in a couple of months, monsieur, and you will find only a parched and fissured wilderness with not a green thing in sight. It is a terrible thing to see."

Aleppo was a surprise. The new town, dominated, like the old, by that tremendous Cecil B. de Mille citadel on its hilltop, seemed more substantial, more modern, busier, and somehow more real than any city I had seen in Turkey. Soaring new blocks of flats and offices, built in the local yellow-white limestone, were going up on all sides. On the outskirts new factories were being built. Aleppo, clearly, was in the grips of a boom.

Brisk business activity is nothing new to Aleppo. For centuries, under many masters, Hittites, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, it has lain at the meeting point of the great caravan routes between Asia and Europe. And still today its labyrinthine old bazaars, a maze of twelve miles of narrow covered passageways, present an Arabian Nights vision of opulence more dazzling than I encountered anywhere else in the Middle East.

The wealth of the new Aleppo, like the old, is derived from trade; but it is trade from a rather different and possibly more permanent source. It is the first fruits of an agrarian revolution.

Syria and Lebanon are French-speaking and republican. Iraq and Jordan are monarchies with administrative systems made in Britain

SYRIA is a vast undeveloped land with few people. It is reliably estimated that its cultivated area can be profitably *doubled*. Up in the north-eastern corner, for instance, there is a great tract of fertile, watered land that lies between the Euphrates and the Tigris. It is called *Al-Jezira*—the island. And it is almost empty: its population today is still only twenty per square mile.

But today the Jezira has been discovered. Up there in that remote corner where Syria joins hands with Turkey and Iraq, hundreds of tractors are roaring about, breaking new ground. Rich men from the towns have rented tracts of land—it is mostly State Domain—and are cultivating it on modern lines. Slowly, peasants are beginning to move up from the poverty-stricken and crowded areas. New roads are opening up the wilderness. Now there is even an airport and a daily flight from Aleppo and Damascus.

Under such stimulus, here and elsewhere there have been startling increases in the output of the land. From 5,000 tons in 1947, Syria's cotton crop had reached 80,000 tons by 1954. The wheat crop has trebled its prewar figure. And a large part of this new wealth is channelled through Aleppo.

Yet as I travelled on through the Arab lands of the Middle East I found that Aleppo's was no merely localized boom. It was everywhere. In Damascus and again in Jerusalem I stayed in fine new hotels which had been open only a week or so. Craftsmen were still working on them. Beirut is fabulous: new, ever more luxurious hotels seem to spring up there overnight. In Amman, too, crowded now with bustling Palestinians, masons' chisels rang out everywhere.

It seemed clear that some more powerful stimulus was at work than merely swollen harvests. What powerful genie—for hardly less seemed required—was behind the astonishing transformation that thus seems to be overtaking one of the world's most obstinately backward areas?

The Biblical cities of Tyre and Sidon—in

Continued on page 53

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In a public house, Sergeant Dalling keeps an eye on the customers. The chief constable of Nottingham says: "My girls will have a bash at anything"

Miss Dalling's word is law

by ANTONY FERRY

As a detective, she goes on the beat with a woman's eye and a formidable talent for talking. They trap the wiliest criminals

WHEN A SLIGHT, greying old woman called at a Nottingham home to collect a charity donation some months ago, a plain-clothes policewoman named Ida Dalling took notes of the conversation from a hiding place in the kitchen.

After a complaint from the householder, she had agreed to witness a small amount of money changing hands and to take evidence to support a possible charge of false pretences.

But when Sergeant Dalling began to follow her suspect, the woman disappeared into a doorway. A moment later, two old women came out dressed and behaving exactly alike. They were identical twins.

Reluctant to arrest them without positive identification, the policewoman followed them for three days, hoping that they would make a mistake.

Finally they did. While one collected money from a shop owner, Sergeant Dalling noticed that the other had forgotten to put on a brooch matching the one that her sister was wearing.

This slight oversight was enough to make identification possible. It might never have caught a policeman's attention; but to Sergeant Dalling, a woman detective for five years, some kinds of police work need a woman's eye for detail.

She arrested the twins and booked them at the Nottingham Central police station, in Shakespeare Street, where she reports for duty with about thirty other policewomen and nearly six hundred policemen.

At the station, she is known as a detective with a brisk, intuitive approach to crime. She has five commendations from the chief constable, who sparingly issues no more than a dozen a year among the men and women who enforce the law in England's largest small-industries town.

Nottingham has a big population of transient women working in the light industries. Its force of policewomen is necessarily larger than average, and their duties are more varied. With four policewomen permanently assisting the men in the C.I.D. branch, the town claims to have the highest crime detection ratio in England.

Most policewomen with the aptitude serve for short periods in the C.I.D. branch. But Sergeant Dalling, who heads the woman detectives, has spent half of her ten years' service looking like the wife of a middle-income professional man on a shopping expedition.

She has the regulation issue of three tunics and skirts, one set individually tailored, but she wears uniform only on special occasions. During a single eight-hour shift, her beat is limited only by the distance she can cover in three-quarter heels.

One afternoon, she heard a woman shopper order £80 worth of goods on hire purchase. When the clerk, filling out the proper forms, asked her occupation, the shopper said, "I'm a policewoman." Sergeant Dalling immediately arrested her.

Apart from the irregular, sometimes adventurous duties of a plain-clothes detective, Sergeant Dalling must take fingerprints and long statements, check antecedents, guard hospital cases, visit licensed premises, cafés and bus

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As she recognized Haig and the dog, Black Wing gave a cry and tore herself free. Williamson turned back towards the canoe

APPROACH TO SUNRISE

by MICHAEL CARLIN

ILLUSTRATED BY SEABRIGHT

Out in the wilds he had been left to die. But hatred and anger drove him relentlessly on. He had to save this girl and avenge his brother's murder

THEY HAD COME DOWN from the village of the northern Blackfeet a week away, Haig and Brill Williamson paddling the heavy canoe with the hunting catch of skins and furs, and Haig's brother and Black Wing skimming the fast water in the light canoe. The autumn sun glittered on the river running swiftly in its deep cleft between the mountains, striking fragments of gold into the white foam of prow and paddle, and the freshening wind sang.

Young James Haig sent his deep voice over the river, singing his joy in the keen air and the running water and the movement of his buffalo shoulders and long lean arms. Younger than his brother, he had the same nose and cold grey eyes, and also he had Black Wing, and it was for her that he sang.

The elder Haig and Williamson in the big canoe were silent at their tasks, and the great dog called Red stood grinning into the wind.

Black Wing was beautiful. Every Indian girl is black of hair and eye and many are lithe as deer, high breasted and straight backed. She was all that and with such a grace to her looks and movements that, naming her, the Blackfeet gave her many titles, of which Black Wing was only one.

James Haig had married her by word and vow and sign before the medicine pole and all the village according to custom, and there was much jealousy among the bloods. Now he was taking her south to another marriage before a stove-hatted sheriff with whisky on his breath, and to a log house and five hundred acres of bluegrass country.

The elder Haig bent impassively to his paddle. The gay singing floated over from the small canoe, but he did not need to be reminded of the happiness of his brother. He knew and rejoiced in it, for his brother was the core of his life. Yet there was doubt inside him, an unshaped fear, a warning that pointed no way but made vague and important threats.

Williamson was bent to the paddle in front of him. A big man of Haig's age. A big passionate man, careless of life, a companion of Haig's on this trip but no friend. Haig gazed at the wide, skin-clad back moving rhythmically before him. He had seen how Williamson looked at Black Wing. He desired her, of course, but how much? Was this the danger?

The paddles swept, the river flowed past, margins of pine and open land came and went along the banks, the bursts of song lifted into the air. Towards nightfall they camped, the men building a big fire and Black Wing busy with meat and coffee and cakes of flour.

Wrapped in their blankets they slept, and in the morning stirred and ate and took to the canoes. So they came down to where the river began its great westward curve.

The paddles swung, and young Haig sent his deep voice singing over the water. He sang with joy, and for the lovely girl with him

Sunrise lay beyond that, a trappers' post of timber buildings and a police post. And Sunrise was their half-way point on the journey south. It was a long trip, and already Haig was sleeping with hair-trigger alertness just behind his sleep waiting to jerk him into action. Action against what? His reason cursed his instinct for shying at shadows.

That afternoon they beached the canoes and Haig and the dog went up towards the lap of the mountains for fresh meat, while the others recaulked the canoes, boiling buffalo hooves and knifing the jelly over the joining of the canoe-skins.

For the first time since the journey began Haig felt free, his rifle slung across his shoulder, the dog nosing the air, the challenge of game excluding all other emotion.

The hunting was fair, and Haig called it off when a small mountain deer rested on his shoulders and a rabbit, its fur already turning to the white of the winter snow, lay in his bag.

Then, as he came down a spit of the mountain, he saw the smoke and knew it was trouble. The smoke was trunking up strong into the cold blue sky, and it came from the camp but too much for the camp-fire. He cached the hunting catch and went on down fast.

Within a mile of the camp he signed to the dog loping beside his Indian trot, and slowed and brought up his rifle. The signs were that it was Indian trouble, and he went slowly and cautiously, bent so that he seemed almost to be moving on all fours, the dog floating like a ghost beside him.

There was nothing of the camp left, only the body of his brother, the hair gone, and the grey ashes weeping their dying smoke. Of the stores there was nothing, no flour or meat or sugar or tobacco or coffee. The whisky was gone and the guns and all the equipment. The small canoe was ashes down by the water.

Williamson had meant it to look like Blackfoot work. . . .

HAIG looked, sickened, feeling anger grow in him. No Indian had done this. At a glance he saw that Williamson had not finished the job. He had lifted the hair but had made none of the other mutilations that are necessary if a man's ghost is not to sit gibbering beside you at night.

Haig dug a grave for his brother and piled big stones on it while the dog sat silently watching. Then he remade the fire, for the evening air was chill, and squatted before it. He had not so far thought of Black Wing, but now he thought about her. Williamson had killed his brother and taken the girl and the stores, thinking that Haig would believe that Indians had attacked. And perhaps he had thought it did not greatly matter what Haig believed because, without stores he would surely perish. . . .

After a time Haig slept.

He woke in the half-light of dawn and nudged the dog with his foot and went off at a jogtrot to get his blood moving. He went back up the trail to his cache. He threw the rabbit to the dog and skinned the deer and made his fire and

put the heart and liver on the red-hot wood-ash. The rest he placed to dry on a sheltered rock in the sun. When he had eaten he emptied his pockets and his bullet pouch and his hunting sack and calculated what to do.

Away on the river were Williamson and Black Wing and they would come in time to Sunrise. He must be there to meet them. For him there was now only one way, across the mountains, and he had no stores or equipment or snow-clothing. He would be fighting against cold and starvation while Williamson paddled easy water with a full belly. But he would march with hatred and revenge, with his own great strength and experience, and he would march with Red.

Weighing up the chances, Haig made Red the most important thing in his scale. Next was the rifle, but only fifteen cartridges remained for it, and one of these he must keep until his journey's end. Then the hunting knife; and a box of matches.

At first the weather helped. The man and the dog went steadily up and onwards, sleeping by banked fires at night, hunting on the march whenever game offered.

Every day Haig put out meat to dry, filling the hunting bag and his pockets and tying parcels of meat which he hung from his belt and by thongs from his coat, so that by the fourth day he looked like a travelling pedlar with his wares strung about him.

On the fifth day they cleared the tree-line and came into the region of rock and scrub, where the air was cold as ice. From now on there would be only a gambler's chance of game of any kind, and now only four cartridges remained, apart from the one Haig was keeping for Williamson.

That night Haig tasted snow in the air. He built his fire under a ledge of outcropping rock and when he measured out their meal he held a little back, for the snow coming early was not a good sign.

In the morning he could see that it had been only a little storm, the snow shallow on the ground. He and Red ate, then they moved on.

After an hour they came to rough going, and with the broken surface hidden under snow it was necessary to go carefully and slowly. Haig put Red to go in front. To the left here the mountainside fell sheer into the ravine and the trail led close to the edge.

It was here that Red dropped abruptly on his belly, and, thrusting out muzzle and tail, pointed over to the screes up and to the right.

It was a mountain bear, a male and past its prime, and it was coming heavy on its pads two hundred paces away. Haig saw the steam of its nostrils in regular spouts as he slung his rifle from his back and called to Red to stay. He dropped to his knee and waited. He would fire at a hundred paces, long for a kill but giving him time to reload and take another shot if it was necessary, and even then time for a third.

Normally a bear is cautious, particularly when the scent is man, but this one was angry. As soon as he got the scent strong and had fixed the man in his sight he began his run, giving his battle roar at first but then coming silently. At a hundred paces Haig fired and knew his shot was good, but the great breastbones of the bear took and deflected it. The bear slewed sideways roaring and came on again on three pads, its right forepaw dangling.

Haig reloaded and, at less than fifty paces now, shot at the muzzle, and the bear broke to the ground, crimsoning the snow. It could move now only with the left arm and leg, but it heaved itself onwards in convulsive thrusts. It was now very near.

Haig took aim for the last shot. He pressed the trigger and the hammer fell with a sharp click, and that was all. And the bear was now not more than five paces away and trying to pull itself erect into its final fighting position.

Too late to reload, Haig drew his knife and sent Red at the bear. There was nothing the bear could do against the dog, who went in like an arrow-flash, and withdrew and went in again, missing the heavy stroke of the bear's clawing with easy precision.

Haig came swiftly behind the bear and hooked the head back with his left arm and struck into the throat with the knife. He drew out the knife and thrust it in again, hanging on to the great back.

Hurt to the very quick of his being, the bear suddenly with enormous effort half rose, lifting Haig with him, and then fell over backwards, pinning the man under his eight hundred pounds. Below the shallow cushion of snow lay hard and uneven rock and before the world blacked in his eyes Haig felt sharp agony in his left arm and heard the crack of his ribs.

The bear raised itself, blind now and dying, and moved slowly and yet more slowly until it came to the very edge of the fall into the ravine, and toppled over.

Haig lay unconscious, Red licking his face and whining.

THE sun was shining direct on his face when Haig came to, and for a while he lay without movement, until gradually his brain cleared and he gently flexed his muscles. The broken ribs he could feel as an ache and then a sharp pain shooting into his chest, but there was nothing he could do about them. He could only hope they would not pierce his lungs.

The pain in his arm was like a knife when he tried to move. That was more serious than the rib trouble, for it meant he could use the rifle only with difficulty. And now he had only one cartridge left, except for Williamson's.

All the time he sat there Red was dancing round him, licking his face, then sitting with his tongue lolled out, then dancing again and giving his short coughing bark.

Red. In the new weighing-up Red counted most. What had been a four-day march was now perhaps ten days' toil, more if the weather broke. He made the tally. Red, first, against whose hairy body he could find some warmth and who might catch food. Then the weapons. He would be lucky to get a target for the rifle that would stay while he propped it against some support and fired with his good arm. Also, with one cartridge, there were no margins for error. There was, of course, the knife, a good weapon but it would not help to find and kill food.

Then the food he already had. He had dried meat still hanging in fronds like tattered leather from his shoulder tassels and from his belt where he had hung it, but much had gone.

He thought his arm was not broken, only wrenched, and would get no worse if he took care of it, and he could manage with his broken ribs. He got to his feet very carefully, using Red's shoulder to get him past the critical point from crouch to standing erect. He put his bad arm through his belt and went on.

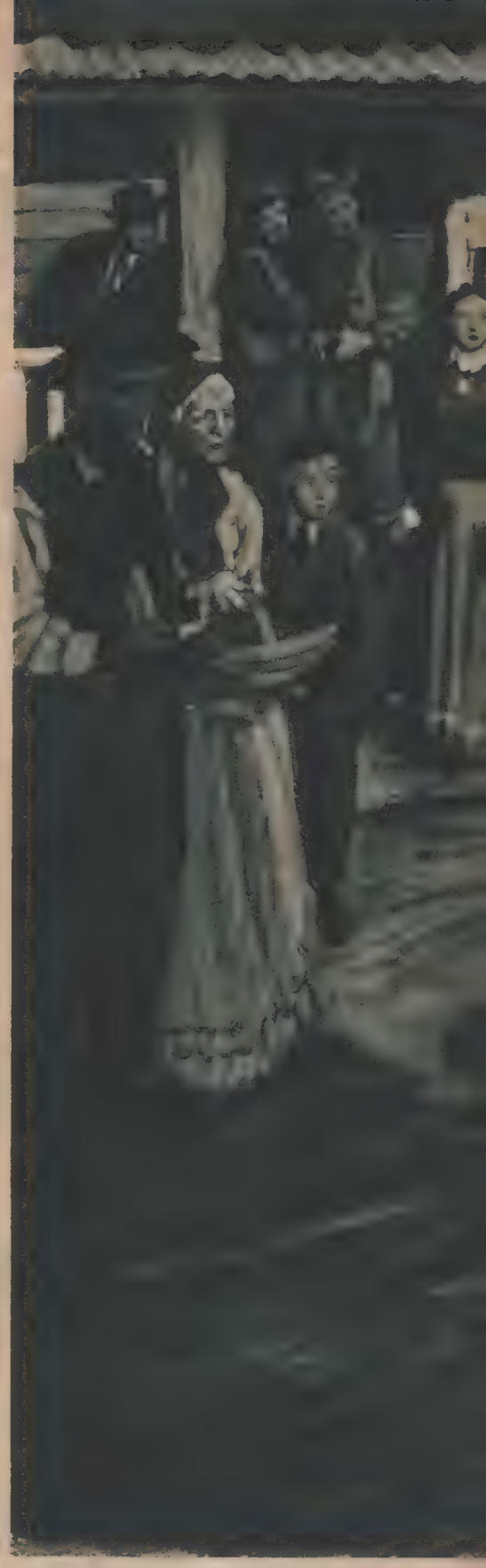
They made little ground for the rest of that day, for Haig did not want to push himself too hard.

The following day they made nine miles and that night the deer meat was finished. Haig had learned the trick of moving so that he avoided the dagger-stabs of pain, but he was weaker, spending his energy and not recovering it from food.

Red was also weaker. His belly had shrunk and his ribs were tight against his skin. He could go like this for weeks, but Haig calculated that perhaps very soon the question of life or death would be answered by the dog's speed and strength.

The next day they made less than eight miles, and again they found nothing, and a bad night followed, with hunger and cold destroying the man, and the dog pathetic in its need.

It was this night that, in his misery, Haig realized that another man would find food in the



His clothes tattered and caked in blood, he

dog around whose furry back his good arm was now clasped. But at the awareness that his brain could register such a thing he recoiled with horror, pulling away from Red. He was deeply ashamed.

Next day they came across a snow-rabbit. Red sighted it and bolted after it, a dark smear across the white mountainside, while Haig sat and waited. It was a long chase, and he wondered whether it would not take more out of the dog than a mere rabbit, shared, could put back. Then he thought that in its extreme hunger hardly any dog alive would bring food back.

But when Red came loping back the rabbit was in his jaws and the skin not broken, and Haig took him and rubbed his beard against the dog's iron face and talked to him.

They ate the rabbit raw, wasting nothing. Then, while they were eating, Red's hackles stiffened and the growl ran along his throat and when Haig looked, he made out a speck, moving slowly along their track. It was a wolf.

For the next two days they made fair going

made his way slowly along the street. Everywhere people stood and stared, but no one spoke

of it, Haig spending his last available cartridge on a big buck rabbit and Red snatching another. The wolf did not leave them, but kept its place behind as though tied to them by some invisible towline. And at night Haig knew by Red's throat-growls that it closed up on them and stayed with them.

Haig's weakness grew, but every day they made seven or eight miles, until at last the interminable mass of mountain was behind them. If nothing stopped them, another day would see them moving out of the thin air and down towards the timber. There would be food —if Red could catch it. Haig now had only his one precious cartridge left, and that was for a different killing.

But that night the big storm came. They went hungry to sleep inside a cave, leaving the keen wind to race past outside. The morning came without light and the wind bore a flood of snow, so that the cave entrance was half closed.

It snowed all that day until the late afternoon, and Haig knew that he could not go another day and night. Red was filed by starvation down to bone and sinew and stringy muscle, but there was still vigour in his movements. Haig felt a murderer, keeping Red with him when the dog could live wild even in this country. But he knew that even on his order the dog would not now leave him but would stay with him and die also, giving the little warmth in his famine-torn body to his master.

Then Haig realized that death might come sooner than he thought. He realized it when he looked out from the cave as the light faded and saw the grey wolf, nearer now.

It moved very slowly, almost dragging itself over the snow, and Haig looked at it and felt almost friendly towards it, realizing now that it was an old wolf that would not stay to be destroyed by its own pack but had gone out to seek its own death. Come on, old wolf, he thought. Come on, old one, there is room here and we can lie down together, me and Red and you, and wait for it.

As he watched, it still came on, creeping slowly, and the rumble grew in Red's throat. And then Haig saw that what was coming towards him over the snow was not company in death but the chance of life.

He took his rifle but did not load it. In the face of death he would not use that one cartridge he had kept for Brill Williamson. Instead he took his knife and began to cut at the hide strap of the rifle. After he had rested a while, he crawled deeper into the cave and called Red and signed for him to lie down.

First he tied his forelegs hard, and then his hindlegs, and then he knotted the rest around his muzzle. Now Red would not be able to interfere, or even to scare the wolf with his roaring bark.

Haig rolled away from the dog and took his knife in his good hand and lay still as death. He had to wait a long time, but in the end he heard the soft quick sniffing of the wolf at the cave-mouth. Red was trying to cry out and leap against the wolf, but Haig lay still, and gradually, with stops and small belly wrigglings, the wolf came into the cave until he could smell its rankness and feel the breath of it.

Not too soon. He must not be too soon.

The wolf came over to him, and he knew his weakness as it lowered its muzzle and nosed over his chest seeking his throat. And he thought: what a damn wolf. It's as weak as I am. It's got one bite left in this world and it has to make it right.

He lay still until he felt the muzzle near his throat, and then as he felt the wolf tense for its bite he struck upwards into its belly. And as he did so Red worked off the binding from his jowls and sent his bark filling the cave with sound.

The wolf was very old and weak and died easily. When he was sure, Haig crawled to Red and untied him.

He fought his stomach to keep the wolf meat down, and would not allow himself to sleep until he felt the first tiny strengthening inside him, like a spring flower stirring under the frozen earth. Then he knew it was all right and he slept. His dreams were wild with images of the Indian girl and the murderer she travelled with. Where were they now?

WHEN he awoke the sun was dancing a cold bright dance on the snow. The pain was back in his arm and ribs and there was another pain of hunger in his stomach. He made a proper jointing of the wolf and packed the pieces in his hunting sack, and when he had finished he ate a little and threw a piece to the dog.

A little later they set out again. Resting every half mile Haig went staggering through the snow, sinking sometimes to his knees and calling to the dog to tug him free. He made five miles before sundown, and towards the end he saw a few patches of scrub and then, deep below, a spread of rough country dropping down into tall timber. . . .

They entered Sunrise two days later, the tattered man holding his rifle, his skin coat caked with blood and filth, his steps curiously slow and careful, and the dog gliding beside him. As Haig made his way along the trodden earth people stood and stared but none came up to him or spoke.

He reached the trading post. He walked in, Red at his heels, and the talk and laughter of the men there were strangled as he went slowly towards the bar.

When he got there he stood still, his mouth working but no words coming out. They watched him, looked at his arm clamped in his belt, his bloodied skin rags, his black frozen face with old, dried blood blackening and matting his beard, and the shiny black marbles of his eyes. Many of them knew him and gradually recognized him, but they said nothing. The storekeeper knew him and stood waiting.

When the words came they were all croaked

Continued on page 42

Make a wish, a Christmas wish

Timely as mistletoe, charming as a fairy tale, and with uses to delight every woman's heart. To your most feminine friends send the Wishing Well of charm—Bathjoys for glamour in the bath, with Nulon to keep hands smooth and lovely. It's *the* compliment of the season.

The Wishing Well pack of six Bathjoys with a bottle of Nulon costs 4/3d. There is also a special gift pack of six Bathjoys at 2/3d.

Bathjoys and NULON HAND CREAM

Murraymints

the too-good-to-hurry mints

There is no way of doing justice in words to the pleasure of MURRAYMINTS. Do try them for yourself. You'll find them absolutely fascinating. They're hard, with a creamy smoothness, and they have a delicate hint of mint that's most refreshing. MURRAYMINTS last a wonderfully long time!

-with a delicious hint of mint!

STEADY BARKER! (2) *by Eric Barker*

I take the Windmill in my stride

Frequently the audience ignored me: they had come to see the chorus girls. But I always kept going—even when there wasn't an audience

HAVING CUT ADRIFT from sanity, I was afloat on the open sea and the effect was exhilarating. It was 1931. I was nineteen and had just thrown overboard a safe, well-paid job in my father's City business to become a full-time professional writer. I had put my thumb to my nose at all the things which respectable people hold most precious. I was different from everyone else at last and, almost as important, Captain of My Fate. The fact that none of my stories or plays had yet earned me a single farthing did not bother me. I was going to be famous and make a lot of money.

Of course, what I had not allowed for was that after any bit of excitement like this, there is always a devastating period of anti-climax. Each morning Father left our suburban home in Purley, Surrey, and went off to work; I sat in my bedroom writing, and gradually I was just accepted. It became, apparently, as natural for me to pursue my insensate occupation in the mornings, as it was for Mother to go off to her favourite grocer's and ask one of the white-coated assistants to slice her off a piece of yellow cheese.

I became the forgotten failure instead of the colourful, amusing one, but I wrote and wrote and, not being tired after a day's work in the City, the ideas came to me better. True, my savings account began to drop a little, but I didn't panic. I had gambled, and the time to worry was when the gamble didn't come off.

THE beginning was undramatic. One morning a letter came from my agents. It said that an editor had accepted my short story called *The Important One* and was going to pay five guineas.

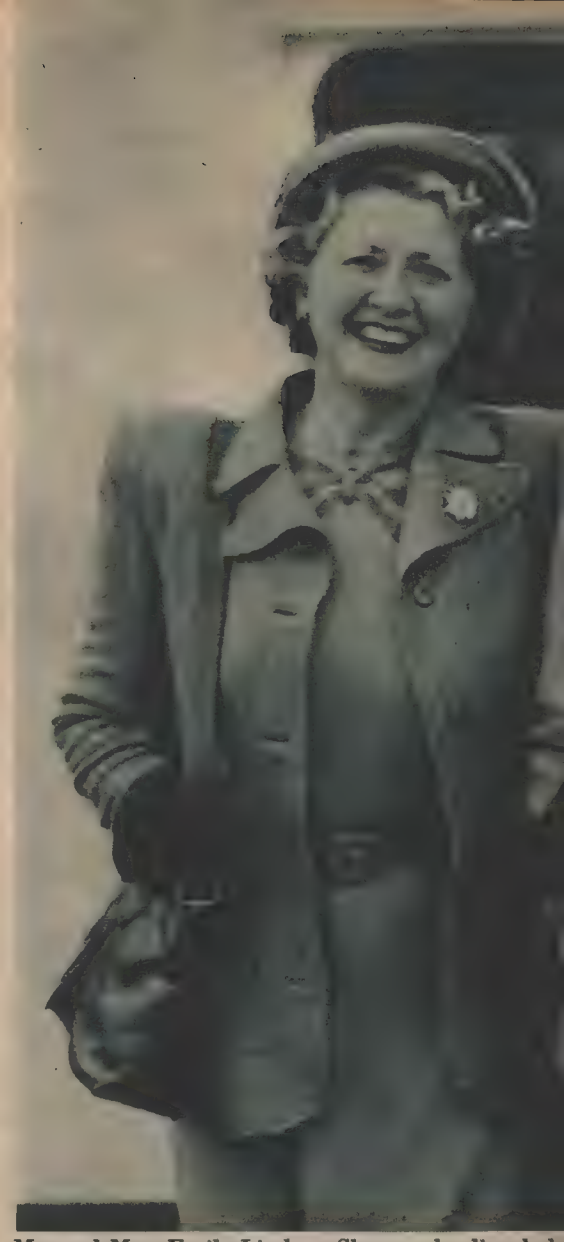
I shall never forget that moment. I think it was the most exciting I have ever known. It was also very touching. The theme of the lonely faith being finally justified is always touching in others. When oneself is the hero it is doubly so.

I read the letter again, my hand shaking slightly, finished breakfast calmly, and prepared to see my father off. As he went, I showed him the letter. And that was just as touching, because he was even more pleased than I was.

That day, another letter arrived telling me that Ward Lock the publishers had bought my school story for £25. The following morning there was a letter from the Arts Theatre Club in London to say that they liked a skit of *Private*

An early Barker sketch at the Windmill Theatre. After an audition, he accepted £4 a week—and then found that his agent had been offered £5

Bernard Miles with his actress wife, Josephine Wilson. Financially, he could hardly wait for the opening of the Birmingham show he was rehearsing with Barker—Josephine was expecting a baby



Mr. and Mrs. Emile Littler. She was leading lady London. He gave Barker his first professiona

Lives which I had written, and that they would consider doing it as a curtain raiser.

This little skit I had done at the Sutton Tennis Club, with small success but a lot of pleasure. I had played the Noël Coward part, including a chi-chi song at the piano. It was all very ultra-Coward, and has been done in intimate revue *ad nauseam* since, but then it was new. What had struck me was how much I enjoyed acting it, and also how difficult acting was. I decided to learn to act as well. But how?

One morning I put on a green shirt and suède shoes, made my hair sufficiently untidy to give an impression of Bohemianism, and went up to Town. I went straight to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (it was in the holidays), rang the front door bell, and told a maid who answered it that I would be grateful if the Principal could find time to see me.

The maid was unco-operative to the point of hostility, but she finally agreed to take the message, although she was still unwilling to concede that anything could come of it. She was wrong. Mr. Kenneth Barnes *would* see me.

I was shown into his office, and he rose to greet me. He looked rather like an actor of the old school, slightly leonine, and he was wearing slippers.

I was on a fairly good wicket, having had my sketch accepted by the Arts Theatre, and naturally I got this in quick. Then I told him I thought I would be able to write better for the theatre if I learned to act. What did he think?

"Frankly, I don't think you look much like an actor at all," he replied. Then he told me how much it would cost me to come to the Academy, if accepted, and that it would be a full-time course.

I couldn't give up my writing, so I thanked him for his courtesy and help, and made ready to go.

"Would you like some private coaching?" he suggested, "to see if there is anything there?"

Once again that was a question of cost. He picked up the telephone: "Is that you, Malcolm? I've got a young man here with the usual trouble. Yes. Of course. Writes a bit, too. Got a sketch going on the Arts. Could you spare any time to give him a look over, to see if there's anything there? M'm? No, I can't. He's here with me. All right. Thanks. 'Bye."

He wrote an address. "Mr. Malcolm Keen," he said, "will see you now, if you go round to his flat. He's not far from here."

MR. MALCOLM KEEN, even more leonine, was wearing a velvet smoking jacket with midnight-blue silk facings. When I arrived, he was busy learning his part in a new John Van Druten thriller, *Somebody Knows*. I noticed that the part was hacked about with blue pencil, and whole pages were crossed out.

"I'm a lawyer," he said. "About forty-eight. Read it."

I have never been so frightened in my life. I read all the bits that hadn't been crossed out.

"H'm," he said. "What's your job now?"

"I'm a short story and revue sketch writer."

"Ah, yes." He nodded, rose thoughtfully and pulled another book out of his bookcase. "I should stick to that if I were you,' he said. "You'll never be a great actor."

To this I could reply quite truthfully, "I—I never thought I would, Mr. Keen. I just wondered if I could act enough to get a job to learn stagecraft."

He opened the book in his hand, and handed it to me. "Try this!" he boomed.

It was a passage of Noël Coward's introduction to the delightful highbrow ballet in *This Year Of Grace*. It was light, frothy, witty, amusing.

"You did that well," he said at the end. "You're very restricted, but you might scrape along at this sort of thing—compèring—although there's not a lot of it."

He agreed to give me some instruction. First he made me do all the things I was least suited for. I lay on my back and had to shout at the top of my voice in numbers. I had to make love to chairs, saying only numbers. I had been married to the fireplace for twenty years and suddenly found it was going off with a Mexican. I had to ask it to stay in numbers. I was delighted, and told it to go in numbers. I died. I defended a parapet against Zulus. I wrote the Marseillaise. I questioned a murderer.

At the end of some twelve sessions, Mr. Keen said: "That's enough!" I never found out whether he could stand no more, or whether he merely felt that he was wasting his time. I know, for my part, that I had learned a lot.

When I asked him what I owed him for my course of instruction he was generous beyond all reason, and said it had been a pleasure, which I find hard to believe. I continued to ring Mr. Malcolm Keen occasionally on various matters and we were getting along nicely until one day I made the fatal error of telephoning him at nine o'clock in the morning, an unearthly hour to some actors.

His tone of voice was chilling, and I knew that I had done the wrong thing. That evening he had given me seats to go to see him in *Caesar And Cleopatra* at the Old Vic, and had invited me to go round to his dressing-room afterwards, and I had merely been phoning to confirm that this was still on. I decided to chance it.

Here again it was not my lucky day, and I committed the unpardonable offence of trying to be a wag in the principal dressing-room of the Old Vic. I said that although I had admired his performance enormously, his costume and especially the brass helmet they had given him was such that in the fire scene I kept thinking of him as the captain of the fire brigade. This

in *Once In A Lifetime* until the show reached part in the production—paying him £3 a week

Vivian Van Damm with two of the Windmill girls. "Working at the theatre was like being at a boarding school—but less colourful," says Barker. "Vivian ruled it as a benevolent dictator"

did not go well, and my path was not invited to cross Mr. Keen's any more. I did not see him again until the other evening when he appeared in a television play, looking very little older, and acting better than ever.

I went to the Q Theatre at Kew Bridge and paid a small subscription for the privilege of being taught still more about the theatre. For this I was to be allowed to hang about the place for a few weeks, and play any part for which I should be considered suitable. Straight away I was cast as a policeman in a play, the name of which I have forgotten.

Next there was a play that had something to do with emigrants to America. This time I was cast as an American policeman, and had to stand at the door of the court in an American trial scene. Then came *The Merchant Of Venice*. Everyone had a part who was capable of standing on two legs and I was all set to play a Venetian policeman in the trial scene, but my break had come.

I played Gratiano, but I cannot for the life of me remember one other person in the play. I only know that my costume was more suited to a Punch and Judy show.

I had a little pillbox hat with a feather in it, and maroon tights which a moth had rendered so indecent that you could have sworn it was being facetious.

I DIDN'T dry up once, but on the opening night I got so excited when I had lashed myself up to say: "Now infidel I have you on the hip" that my hat slid off, and some moron guffawed in the audience. I learned afterwards that it was a friend for whom I had got a free seat.

My proud family, who turned up to see me in my hour of triumph, have since told me that I looked exactly like a monkey on a barrel organ.

This acting was all good fun, but it was taking me too much away from writing, so I retired once again to my bedroom and finished my third novel.

Then I had another piece of luck. I sold my second book. It was called "Sea Breezes" and it finally netted, less commission, all of £66 17s. 5d.

To my amazement, I had no sooner sold this than I received a letter headed *Birmingham Repertory Theatre* in which the manager requested me to present myself for an interview in London. He had even signed his name personally—Emile Littler.

When I turned up for the interview, I was shown into a tiny office where the youthful and bedimpled Mr. Littler sat side by side with his producer, a thin, rather frightening man named Herbert Prentice.

What had I done? Where had I played? With whom? I mumbled something about playing an American part at Q, and Gratiano in *The Merchant Of Venice*, and a lot about revue sketches, and it was pretty obvious to them that here was a big-mouthed phoney, so Mr. Littler stopped me dead and said: "I'll give you three pounds a week!"

The full significance of this hit me with a bang. Not only was I a professional writer, I was also a professional actor.

Awaiting me at home was the cheque for the school story. I didn't hesitate. Things were beginning to move. If I was going to be big, I must think big. I went out and bought my first motor car.

It cost me £12 10s. and was a six horse-power Peugeot, with a fixed back axle, so that when you went round a corner, one of the back wheels had farther to travel than the other and got dragged round, with a lot of shrieking. It was the sort of car you still see occasionally, coming out of a side road in France with a pig sitting on the back seat looking the wrong way.

I packed my few clothes, a lot of paper and my typewriter, and set off for Birmingham. It was obviously to be a big production because when we arrived the stage of the little Repertory Theatre was crammed with actors and actresses. We were dragooned as far as a gaggle of actors could be by the stage manager, Charles Victor, who was also playing the principal comedian in the show.

The play was an American satire on talking pictures called *Once In A Lifetime*, and most of us were to be a crowd in a hotel. We were as motley a crowd as could be imagined. There was a man with a wooden leg, one with an astrakhan collar who used to read *The Times*, and several attractive women.

There was another tall man with spectacles, looking something like myself but a little older, who was particularly friendly, and had obviously had more experience of this sort of thing than I. We introduced ourselves. His name was Bernard Miles.

THE first rehearsal was a pretty grim affair. All the riff-raff who had been brought down from London massed themselves hopefully on one side. On the other side were the regular members of the repertory company. The parts were given out.

The riff-raff from London, with one or two exceptions, were all cast as extras with non-speaking parts. I, for example, found myself as a hotel guest in one scene. I had to walk up and down the foyer talking to Bernard Miles.

In another scene I was one of the fourteen Warner brothers, and had to burst in a door with my brothers and be pushed out again. And with this I had shot my bolt.

I found the rehearsing of the show fascinating. The other extras would only show any interest when they were actively engaged. As soon as they had cut their own little caper, they would

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Boy on a Dolphin

by ***DAVID DIVINE***

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

In harbour, Nicomachos waited, ready to seize the statue. Innocently, they rowed on—into his trap

GUIDO TORCELLI had gambled on winning both a fortune and a girl. But he knew now that he had lost the girl: Pero Loustros, the lovely daughter of a millionaire. That became obvious from the moment she slapped him contemptuously across the face during a quarrel.

Pero had been trying to persuade him to give up a stolen statue, a classical bronze that had lain for two thousand years in the sea near the Greek island of Mykonos. But Guido, whom she had once wanted to marry, intended to sell it to an unscrupulous Swedish art-collector, Gunnar Norup.

Weak and selfish, Guido had already double-crossed not only Pero but a Greek racketeer, Nicomachos, as well. And Nicomachos was awaiting a chance for revenge. . . .

The quarrel between Pero and Guido was seen by Alan Calder—a British archaeologist who had been searching for the statue—and an American journalist named Madden.

While Calder ran to the girl's help, Madden went swimming: he had seen Guido's caïque moored nearby.

Madden was not surprised to find the missing statue lashed to the boat's underside. Grinning triumphantly, he surfaced to fill his lungs. Then he dived again—with a knife stretched out before him. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

Trouble Among Thieves

MADDEN knew exactly what he had to do now. The lashings of the tail were close together on the rope near the bows. Quickly and methodically he slashed through them. The tail of the dolphin fell away and the statue hung at an angle from the bottom. The beak hit the planks with a thud, but he couldn't help that.

His breath was going again. He could feel his heart racing intolerably. For the second time he swam to the stern. As he hung there he hoped—he almost prayed—that Pero would keep up her argument with Guido long enough for him to cut the statue free.

This time he allowed himself a shorter period for recovery, knowing that he ought to allow a longer one. Then, diving, he swam towards the statue again.

He went for the lashings once more, and it was easier this time. He had the feel of it now. He slashed through one side and the statue fell away silently, almost as if it was helping him. With quick strokes he attacked the other side and with a movement that he could have sworn was life itself, the great fish rolled over and the head of the boy god came flashing up almost to his eye level and then sank away in one wide breathless curve of beauty.

Utterly played out, Madden swam back to the stern. He was still clinging there when he heard very far off the thud of an underwater exhaust in the distance. "All is now over between them," he said solemnly and began to swim in what he hoped was the direction of the shore.

He could not be certain of the swing of the caïque at the moment of his departure, but after a while he saw below him the water begin to shoal. When he could see the rock below him well enough to know that he could stand, he rested for a little with just the snorkel above the water.

The roar of the exhaust was very close now

The dinghy was hard to pull with the statue drag

Underneath the boat he slashed desperately to free the statue. His heart was racing madly. Soon, he knew, he would have to go up for air

ing in the water astern. But Calder felt intensely happy. Pero looked up at him with enormous admiration. "I am going to be a great trial to you," she said

and he could hear the lash of the propeller through the water. He pushed himself through the last of the shallows, found a rock, got round it so that he was half-hidden, raised his head and pulled off the mask.

The outboard dinghy was almost alongside the caïque. He watched with interest while Guido came roaring up. He saw him stand up and begin to shout. His voice was furious.

The seamen were galvanized into activity. One of them reached over and took off the outboard motor. The two of them pulled the dinghy itself up on to the deck. Guido was working at the engine. Presently it started, the anchor was raised, and the caïque moved away.

When at last he decided that it was safe to leave his hiding place, Madden swam along the shallows to his clothes. The caïque was well through the channel now, moving fast. He could hear the beat of her motor still, but as he slipped out of the water he was sure that Guido would be too busy for backward glances. Standing in the shelter of the rocks he looked down at the dank gaiety of his underpants, his eyes sardonic, remote and satisfied.

He was still looking at them when he saw movement across the water. He was beginning to grin as he stretched for his binoculars. The movement resolved itself into the low, grey outline of Nicomachos's boat, almost lost against the brown and grey of the Mykonos cliffs. It, too, was headed down the channel.

Madden allowed himself the luxury of a laugh. . . .

In the meantime, Calder had found his way over the last ridge. Pero was sitting on a sloping rock with her face buried in her drawn-up knees, her arms clasped tightly round them as if she were trying to compress herself into the smallest possible compass of grief. The outboard dinghy with Guido in it was roaring away down the line of the coast.

For a moment the Englishman hesitated. Then he strode down to the rock, and almost before he had time for connected thought he was sitting next to her with his arm round the slender, heaving shoulders.

Through her tears he heard her voice, muffled and full of sorrow. "He's gone, he's gone and he's got the statue."

"I saw him go," said Calder gently.

"But he's got the statue. He's got it. He told me he had it. Oh, why didn't you come sooner? Why didn't you come?"

His arm tightened around her shoulders, and she lifted her head and turned and put her face against him like a tired child. "He's gone," she wailed.

Gently, his lips just above her ear, Calder asked: "Did you want to go with him?"

The wail of her voice rose higher still. "No, no! I wanted"—a delicate, an almost imperceptible note of surprise crept into it—"I wanted to stay with you." Pero pulled away abruptly and sat looking at him, her mouth as open as her wide eyes and tears streaming down her cheeks.

Calder put both arms round her and pulled her

Continued on page 36

Danger with the gloves on

by DON EVERITT

Fifteen boxers have died in Britain in ten years. "It's only a game," says the A.B.A. ringside doctor. "Why kill yourself?"

BOBBY CALLAGHAN, a professional welterweight boxer from Walworth, London, stepped from the ring at Leyton Baths practically unmarked after his drawn bout with Don Sleet. On the way to his dressing-room, Callaghan complained of tiredness, and suddenly collapsed. At London Hospital surgeons operated on his head, but two days later he died of a brain haemorrhage.

Twenty-one years old, Callaghan had fought more than one hundred bouts as an amateur and five as a professional. In all three bouts before his last he had been knocked out, twice technically. At the inquest, a doctor said that he found Callaghan fit before the fight. The referee described it as clean, skilful, but not hard-hitting. A pathologist said that a blow to Callaghan's head had ruptured a small vein.

"Some unlucky blow," said the coroner. "It was purely an unfortunate accident."

Seven professionals and eight amateur boxers have died after contests in British rings in the last ten years. Callaghan, the latest victim, died in December last year in circumstances typical of the previous fatalities.

In April this year, a doctor examining the semi-finalists before the Amateur Boxing Association championships refused a flyweight permission to box because of a boil on his chin. The doctor offered non-committally to lance the boil, to have the flyweight class postponed, and to examine the boxer again before the re-timed fight. The boxer agreed, passed the examination and won his bout.

Before the finals later in the evening, the doctor ordered a further examination of the boil. He passed the boxer again; but the honorary medical officer to the A.B.A., Dr. Joseph Lewis Blonstein, emphasized that in any less crucial contest the boil would have barred the youth absolutely.

The death of Bobby Callaghan and the protracted case of the boil on the flyweight's chin are extreme examples taken from recent boxing contests held under medical supervision. Since 1950, the professional body, the British Boxing Board of Control, and the A.B.A. claim independently to have made boxing safer than ever before. For proof, Blonstein and his fellow A.B.A. officials invite interested observers to examine their procedures and case records. One invitation went to Dr. Edith Summerskill, a strong opponent of boxing. She declined. The medical sub-committee of the B.B.B.C. has made no similar offer.

Before 1939, medical arrangements at both professional and amateur contests were, to quote a B.B.B.C. doctor, "rather sketchy." In the twenties, Blonstein boxed as an amateur during his student days at University College, London. He won the United Hospitals welterweight title in 1924-25 and 1925-26.

Once, he boxed a fellow student named Pringle, now a noted doctor, and knocked him out. Pringle suffered a cut eye. Blonstein helped to bring him round in the ring and then took his opponent to the casualty ward and stitched the cut. There was no one else to do it.

In 1927, the secretary of the Caius Amateur Boxing Club, in London, went to Blonstein as a patient. The doctor soon found himself acting as medical officer to the club and ultimately to the nearby Battersea and Earlsfield clubs. For more than twenty-five years, he sought to improve the medical supervision of amateur boxing generally.

"Most clubs did not have a medical officer. At a tournament, a local doctor would be brought in at the last moment. In an hour before a match, he would have to examine thirty, forty or more boys with no knowledge of their medical histories."

When Blonstein complained, officials told him not to namby-pamby the boys. "Let them get into the ring and have a bash," they said.

IN March, 1953, enlightened officials in the London Amateur Boxing Association, having appointed Blonstein as honorary medical officer, held a special meeting to discuss the medical examination and welfare of boxers. Out of that meeting grew a scheme under which sixty-three doctors began last October to reduce the risk in amateur boxing in London. By the end of 1956, the doctors plan to have examined all the 1,500 boxers in the 250 affiliated clubs, and to have eliminated those unfit for boxing.

"We generally debar boys more than twenty per cent above the average height or weight for their age, boys who are deaf in both ears or short-sighted, boys with high blood pressure and boys with defects of the joints, muscles or central nervous system. We examine closely any boy with a family history of tuberculosis or epilepsy, or a personal history of heart or lung trouble. We have an exercise tolerance test, when we ask the boy to touch his toes rapidly six times, and then determine whether or not his pulse returns to normal within ninety seconds."

Blonstein files the confidential examination details and refers the problem cases to specialists. The doctor shone his torch into the eye of one boxer and noticed a slight scar. The youth, aged twenty, had undergone an iridectomy eleven years earlier. In the operation, the surgeon had cut away part of the iris to give relief for glaucoma, a blinding disease characterized by increasing tension in the eyeball. The youth said that he had boxed for several years. Blonstein reluctantly told him that he had fought his last fight.

DISSATISFIED, the youth consulted his own eye specialist, and then, at Blonstein's suggestion, two specialists on the London A.B.A. panel. All confirmed Blonstein's verdict. A blow on the eye, they told the boy, could burst the eyeball. They could not allow him to continue to take that risk.

As part of the medical welfare scheme, every amateur boxer in London now has a medical report card which he must give to the medical officer at every contest. In it, the doctors record details of injuries, bouts lost other than by disqualification, and the resulting periods of suspension.

A few boxers try to dodge the procedure. Before one contest, a boy had passed the medical examination when an official who knew

After a bout in the Britain v. Russia match last month, Dr. Blonstein found that Les Newman had a fractured hand. Officials used to tell Blonstein: "Let them get in the ring and have a bash"

World champion Rocky Marciano walks away as Archie Moore is counted out. Amateur officials say that no man should box more than three rounds

him discovered that he had handed in his brother's card. The boy's own card carried a two-month suspension, the automatic result of being knocked out in his last fight.

"At the ringside," says Blonstein, "every London club sponsoring a tournament now has to provide an approved first-aid kit. We have taught trainers and seconds the proper way to treat unconscious and bleeding boxers, and we forbid styptic pencils, nasal stimulants and the other old-fashioned treatments. I would like to see still more safeguards. We should adopt the international rule under which a boxer has to take a count of eight when he is knocked down. And the referee should be able to make more use of the medical officer. For instance, a quick examination by the doctor could dispel all doubts about a foul blow."

After a contest, the doctors suspend boxers according to the injuries they sustain. A cut requiring stitches carries a minimum suspension of four weeks; permanent suspension follows a fractured jaw. Boys knocked out in three successive fights or consistently outclassed receive fresh medical checks. Those who suffer prolonged loss of memory after being knocked out, or who prove to be knock-out prone, are also barred from amateur boxing for life. Some time ago, one boxer dislocated his hip in the ring. Blonstein, refusing to let him box again, said: "It's only a game. Why kill yourself?"

For all its safeguards, the London A.B.A. medical welfare scheme (like its counterpart in British professional boxing) has no real preventive for death in the ring. Death in almost every case follows brain haemorrhage. The type of wound is similar to that sustained when a vehicle strikes a person. The brain shifts in the skull, tearing the cortical veins.

At autopsies, pathologists have noted that two of the last six amateur boxers to die in Britain from ring injuries had exceptionally thin skulls.

BLONSTEIN and a neurologist have examined boxers experimentally with a device known as an electroencephalograph. The E.E.G., as the machine is called, records the brain's activity; the doctors felt that it might detect incipient brain damage from boxing before it became apparent clinically. But after studying forty-eight boxers, Blonstein and his colleague reported that the disadvantages of the E.E.G. appeared to outweigh the advantages.

The men who actively support boxing, both professional and amateur, point out that, in spite of death in the ring, insurance companies regard a boxer as only a medium risk. The hazardous sports, by insurance standards, are rugby, soccer, polo, lacrosse and wrestling. On the Saturday before the death of Bobby Callaghan, a player collapsed and died after a collision in a game of rugby at Birmingham.

The protagonists of amateur and professional boxing disapprove of one another. The amateur officials say that no man should box for more than three rounds and certainly not to profit others. A member of the medical sub-committee of the British Boxing Board of Control says: "The medical control of professional boxing is miles above the amateur scheme."

Certainly, the B.B.B.C. medical control covers licensed promotions all over Britain whereas only the army, R.A.F., Essex and Midlands amateur associations have so far followed the lead of the London A.B.A. But the lack of evidence makes it difficult to assess how the professional arrangements work in practice.

Under the rules laid down by the B.B.B.C. medical sub-committee, the late Bobby Callaghan had four fights in fifty days, lost three of them and took a count of ten in one. An amateur boxer in London would not have fought for at least two months after the knock-out. On the other hand, boxing has killed more amateurs than professionals in Britain since the war.

All such arguments get no nearer to a solution of the fundamental issue raised by the introduction of medical control into boxing generally. At an inquest on an American boxer last January, doctors told the court that the objective of boxers is to deliver a knock-out punch. In their opinion, a knock-out punch meant nothing less than inflicting on the opponent a brain injury which could lead to death. If, said the judge, boxing were not legal, "an assault entailing such consequence would constitute murder." THE END

BOY ON A DOLPHIN—

Continued from page 33

back to him. "That's what I wanted, too. So that's all right."

"But the statue——"

"Don't worry about the statue," Calder's voice was confident. "He won't get away with it." He lifted her face up. "Smile!" he ordered.

"But it's gone!"

She was like a child that refuses to be comforted and Calder did the only possible thing. He bent down and kissed her, and the kiss was salty.

A very long while afterwards he said: "There's nothing we can do now in any case. We haven't a boat."

Lazily Pero looked up from his lap. "There's the dinghy."

"Darling, you haven't been paying the slightest attention! The wind's fallen right away. We'll get across when the ancients come and we'll get a boat to Syra and we'll phone your father from there and start things moving."

There was no shadow of doubt in his voice. He was not prepared even to consider the possibility of failure. He kissed her again, and the kiss clearly made the thing quite final. The statue would come back.

THEY finished it off neatly as they heard the scramble of Madden's feet on the rocks above them. Looking up they saw him standing five yards away.

"Beautiful," he said, "beautiful! Have you two love birds had time to look across the channel?"

Calder started almost guiltily.

"My children," Madden went on, "if you'd had the time, you might have seen a long grey boat hurrying along in a very reasonable imitation of a pirate ship."

"Nicomachos," said the girl, and looked at him with startled eyes.

"My God!" exclaimed Calder. "I'd forgotten Nicomachos."

"He'll get the statue," whispered Pero, "and then we won't know where it will go. Oh, Alan!" Her voice rose up again higher than ever and she flung her arms round Calder's neck.

"For land's sake," said Madden. "The excuses a girl will use!" He looked over his shoulder at the sun. It was very low in the west now. "If you stay here behaving like that you won't have time for a swim before the sun goes down."

"A swim?" Calder whipped his head round and looked at him with a startled light in his eye. "You mean?"

"I mean a swim might do the both of you good. Come on, and let me show you a good place. The water's fine."

Pero stared at him with her eyes wider than he had ever seen them before. "Your hair's wet," she said.

"A guy's entitled to take a bath," retorted Madden belligerently, throwing Calder the snorkel mask.

They were both on their feet now.

"Come on," Madden said again. "Get into that cockleshell of yours. I'll see you down the other side of Gournia." . . .

On the other side, Madden had settled himself on the cliff edge with a comfortable ledge for his back before the dinghy reached the bay.

He waited while Calder rowed patiently to a point halfway across it. Then he called out: "Hold it! I guess that'll do. Come in towards the shore maybe five yards." Then, as Calder obeyed, he called again: "There or thereabouts. Put on your snorkel and look for it."

Calder let go the anchor with a splash and began to slip off his shirt. He still had his bathing trunks on.

Pero looked at him lovingly and said: "Turn round. I've got an old bathing costume in the locker here."

Calder waited obediently while she changed. Then he fitted on the snorkel mask and lowered himself over the side. He floated on the surface, his head under water, staring down into the depths. Pero sat on the side of the dinghy dangling her slender legs in the water.

For five minutes Calder worked round in widening circles, then suddenly he flung his head up and one arm with it in a wide gesture of triumph.

"Found it!" he shouted.

At once Pero slipped from the boat and swam to him.

They dived together, swimming down to the coral and the weed and the bright fish that still blazed in the evening light.

The statue had turned upright with the weight of the dolphin as it sank. It was balanced on a mass of coral as if the great fish had moved with a sudden upward swirl from the sea bottom to greet them. The young Apollo on his back shone in the last filtered light of the sun against the green and purple and shadowed scarlet of the depths. They were alive, this boy and this dolphin, alive and exquisite and full of joy.

Calder felt the girl's hand tighten in his and, half turning, he pulled her to him, and they clung together entwined in the warm translucent sea.

They swam up together, laughing, and the bubbles of their laughter raced them to the light.

Calder pulled the dinghy over towards the statue and dived again with the long stern line. Five minutes later Madden saw the tail of the dolphin come out of the water, and Pero, leaning over the stern in a wild excitement, hold it against the transom. Calder was passing the rope around it, making it fast to the ringbolt. When it was done he remained there, kneeling on the after thwart, staring down into the crystal of the sea.

But Pero straightened herself, turned towards the cliff and called out: "Thank you, John. Oh, thank you, thank you!"

Calder straightened up contritely and, turning, called: "Bless you, John. Bless you!" Then he turned to kneel again. Pero knelt next to him and put her free arm over his back.

Madden shouted: "I'll go over to the harbour, wait for the caïque, and bring it round."

He saw Pero say something urgently to Calder. The Englishman came upright again, looked doubtfully at the girl, then smiled and said: "It's all wrong, darling, but I can't say no to you—yet."

The water was so still, the air so perfect that Madden could hear the words. He said gently to himself: "You'll get over *that* in time. Have to!"

Calder called back to him: "No. Pero has her own plans. . . ."

"Okay." Madden gathered himself up slowly and murmured half aloud: "I've always been able to tell when I'm not wanted."

As he moved away Pero's voice floated up to him: "Meet us on the beach near the hotel."

GUIDO'S fury was dying down now. Common sense was coming back. He could see already that it would have been impossible for him to have both the statue and Pero. If she had gone with him, her father would have hounded them clear across the world.

For an instant he could feel the slender warmth of her body in his arms. Warmth was good and slenderness was lovely, but how long could he have lived with her ideas of romance?

The caïque headed out to sea. Norup was to meet him with the yacht fifteen miles due south of Stapodia. . . .

Guido saw that the bow wave of the strange boat that seemed to have been following him since the afternoon was close behind. Twice after darkness had fallen he had made wide turns in an effort to throw her off.

Now she was coming up faster and faster.

As her bows were almost level with his stern, he heard Nicomachos's voice: "I do not like to be double-crossed." After that, as if that were all that was necessary to say, Nicomachos was silent.

Wildly Guido wondered how he could broach the subject of terms. Even as he wondered the two boats came together, and suddenly there were five men on the deck of the

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caïque and the other boat had sheered away again.

One of Guido's crew showed fight half-heartedly. The other cowered into a corner of the cockpit against the deckhouse. The first one was knocked back across the coach-roof and lay there.

Three men came at Guido. He felt a tremendous blow on the jaw, and he crumpled into the cockpit.

As consciousness came back he heard Nicomachos's cold voice say: "Where is it?"

"Not here." Guido lied automatically, instantly, in a last desperate effort.

Nicomachos said: "What are those ropes for?"

Guido gave up. He lay quite silent while Nicomachos prodded him with his toe.

Nicomachos turned at last to the tall man and said: "There is something lashed beneath the boat. Loosen the ropes and haul them up slowly, one man to each side." He went over and held the torch.

It took some time to loosen the knots. Finally the tall man said: "They are free."

On the other side of the boat the men paid out the ropes cautiously. Nicomachos watched as the wet hemp came up. After a long tense minute two bunches of knotted cord showed above the water.

"Wait!" said Nicomachos. His own boat had come up again. "Two of you get on her and see what you can see from there."

Two men went across. More lights showed. "Nothing," reported one of the men.

"Haul up a little more!"

The other side of the severed cords came into view.

"They have been cut," said the man.

The grey boat sheered in towards them and in that moment Guido shot from his corner of the cockpit in a wild rush. It needed only one push to send Nicomachos over the side. The men heard his shout as he went overboard. The grey boat was almost touching. They jumped for her and Guido let in the clutch and circled away.

Long before the tall man had pulled Nicomachos, spluttering like a cat, out of the water, the calque was lost in the darkness.

SINCE dark, Pero's dinghy had been moored to the quay in Delos, with its stern in deep water to make certain that there was no chance of damage to the statue. Calder had settled the lifebelts, the mainsail and a worn rug on the stones of the quay.

Pero lay snuggled in his arms. "I'm sure it will be midnight much too soon," she said.

Calder roused himself reluctantly. "It's nearly midnight now," he said. "We'd better start back."

They got aboard, and Calder began to row. There was enough starlight for him to see Pero's face lifting out of the sail in which he had wrapped her. It was far too hot in the still air for wrappings but Pero was aware that his protective sense must be indulged.

He rowed in silence for a long while. Star paths showed over the water. The lights of Tinos to the north glowed like a faded halo on the horizon. He rowed on and on and on. The dinghy was hard to pull with the drag of the statue astern.

Now and then Pero talked. Little episodes, fragments of her childhood came out.

Calder learned that her mother had died when she was two. He learned that she loved her father: he could tell it even from the way she piled abuse on him.

And gradually Calder became aware that he was intensely happy, and the stars and the sea and the dark eyes above the cotton of the sail were merged into a wide beatitude.

From the piled cotton of the sail Pero said, finishing some long and gentle commination of her father: "I think I have been a great trial to him."

And then Calder saw her smile in the starlight as she added softly: "And now I am going to be a great trial to you." . . .

Out of the deep shadow of the sea wall Madden's voice sounded with a full, reproachful resonance. "Where *have* you been?"

Pero jumped and turned, splashing in the water.

"You sounded like an indignant landlady," retorted Calder.

"I don't feel like a landlady," said Madden. "I just feel indignant. At any rate you had the sense to come in this side of the bay. Did you guess they were waiting?"

"Guess who was waiting?"

MADDEN, standing on the edge of the dark water, stared out at the two forms still splashing more than waist deep in its darkness. "Nicomachos. He came in about eleven o'clock. I don't think he's pleased."

"Who's he waiting for?"

"You," answered Madden succinctly.

"Why on earth——?" began Calder.

"I guess he felt he could still make a snatch when you brought it alongside. Didn't have the sense to realize that you'd leave it safe on Delos."

"We didn't," said Pero in a small voice. "It's here."

"I give up—I just give up!" Madden bent down low towards the water and looked out. Dimly he could see lifting above the water the exquisite head and the left shoulder of the boy on the dolphin.

"But why bring it here?" he asked.

"We didn't expect Nicomachos to come back, but that's beside the point," said Calder. "Pero wanted it brought in this way. If Mykonos discovers it by itself tomorrow morning there'll be enough of a sense of wonder about it to——"

"Now listen!" interrupted Madden. "This baby's tough. Push Apollo back under the water and come ashore. Then we'll go and find our police friend Micon."

Calder nodded in the darkness. "He's right—we can't risk it yet. But we have plenty of time." For a moment he and Pero struggled in the shallows. Finally he said: "That will do."

Pero came out of the water. She walked straight up to Madden and flung her wet arms round him. "John," she said, her voice full of laughter and tears, "I'm going to be married. At least"—she looked over his shoulder towards Calder—"you haven't said anything about marriage yet, but I suppose you *are* going to marry me?"

"After tonight's goings on," observed Madden dryly, disengaging himself, "I guess it's the least he can do." . . .

Micon, the chief of police, waited silently for them in the shadow of the colonnade.

"You are wet, Pero," he said by way of greeting.

"I am going to be married," answered Pero light-heartedly as if that covered everything.

"Again?" said the chief of police bluntly. "My God! None the less, that can wait. Where is this statue—safe on Delos?"

"As a matter of fact," replied Calder politely, "no. It's—er—on the beach."

"And out on the quay"— Micon's hand jerked dramatically towards the boats—"is that devil incarnate from Athens: Nicomachos."

"Arrest him," said Madden.

"Arrest him for what? He has done nothing wrong. He comes here for a cruise in this—this boat. He cruises. What then? I arrest him. He brings a suit for wrongful arrest. The judge finds me guilty. I—I am arrested then. My wife—my family. . . ." Micon's voice broke tragically.

Madden said: "It's better to be sacked for wrongful arrest than to be thrown out for permitting the most important archaeological discovery of the last twenty years to be hi-jacked on your own doorstep."

"How?" The chief of police flung up both hands in urgent disclaimer. "Tell me how."

"Matter of posterity. Which would

"It's about time you fixed it"

you rather the children shouted after you: the man who made a mistake about Nicomachos—or the man who lost the Apollo of Mykonos?"

"The Apollo of Mykonos . . ." echoed Micon brokenly. "What must I now do?"

"Arrest him," said Pero softly, "arrest him with the promise of a bottle of wine. Tell him that the statue's safe——"

"You've got something there," said Madden. "Once he knows that the authorities know about the statue he'll throw in his hand—I hope."

The chief of police shrugged his shoulders reluctantly but he moved away into the darkness.

"Right," said Madden firmly. "Now you two better go home and get some dry things on."

He watched Pero and Calder go and then settled himself at the place where the chief of police had stood. It was, he saw, an excellent viewpoint, equidistant between the hotel and the base of the mole and covering almost the whole of the harbour.

He could see quite clearly the shape of Nicomachos's boat. There were two men on the mole above it apparently keeping watch. Dimly, faintly, he saw the chief of police striding towards the watchers on the mole.

Micon reached them and for some while there seemed to be an argument. Then, at length, there was a bustle on the boat itself, and a fourth man joined the group on the mole.

The fourth man and Micon began to walk towards the shore slowly. They walked to the lit door of the police post and disappeared inside.

Madden heaved a sigh of relief.

It was the very edge of dawn now. Light quivered over the hills behind the town, hesitant between night and day.

Madden, sitting on the sea wall, heard Calder say: "That'll do. The tail's below water but that can't be helped. It will look as though he's just this second surfaced."

"Right," said Madden, "come out of the water—both of you!"

Pero began to giggle. He heard them splash out and separate. After a few minutes they came back to him. He said: "Now let me get the order of battle. You're still set on that child Theodoree finding the damn thing?"

Patiently Pero answered: "She has the face of an angel. It'll look so well in the newspapers."

"You think of all the angles," said Madden bitterly. "You ought to be marrying me, which heaven forbid. How do we get Theodoree?"

"Guido used to throw stones in at the window of the room in which she sleeps when he needed to attract her attention," said Pero absently.

Calder gathered himself up. "Show me the window."

They went off together. Madden sat brooding on. Below him in the quiet water the statue was beginning to take shape. Little waves came in from the outer sea, gentle waves, caressing waves that lifted and broke with the softness of thistledown against its darkness.

Soon he heard Pero and Calder coming down the narrow alleyway behind him and he left the statue to itself. It was quite light now. Behind the ridge the sun was up. In a few minutes it would be high enough to flood down and change the water of the bay from silver to lapis lazuli. He went thoughtfully into the narrows between the whitewashed walls.

They were walking abreast, the child between them. Her face was composed and grave, but she walked with a lilt. Pero saw him and started forward a little, her face eager. "Everything is all right?" she demanded anxiously.

"Nobody moving," replied Madden. "What time does your balloon go up?"

"The moment the sun touches it," said Pero. "We must have the sun."

Madden squinted up against the skyline. "Not long now. And then?"

"She calls out," Pero answered, hastily going over the details. "She says: 'St. Nicholas has brought him.' And she begins to call: 'Come to the sea!' And the boys up at the square will start to call as soon as they hear her and they will run through the streets calling. After that things must happen."

"After that," said Madden, "anything can happen."

"You have your camera?" Pero took no notice of the interjection.

"I have," he replied wearily.

They waited in the breathless hush of the morning. The little wind of the dawn had long since died. There was no breath of air. The birds, even the gulls, were silent now. The ripples of the water were too lazy to sound along the shore.

Suddenly out of the hush came a high, childish voice calling: "St. Nicholas! St. Nicholas! St. Nicholas! See what St. Nicholas has brought us! Come to the sea, come to the sea!"

Behind them, at the first of the little squares, they could hear boys' voices. Windows rattled up. Casements flew open. Doors banged. They heard feet running. There were more voices on the quay, and all the while the child's voice was lifting, increasing in power, developing a masterly crescendo effect that it kept high above all the other noises: "See what St. Nicholas has brought!"

They moved forward themselves; not too fast, not too slow: not to be among the first batch, not to be later than the first handful.

People were jumping from the end of the quay on to the beach as they came round the corner of the last of the houses. People were running up from the hotel. Heads were thrust out of every window in range. And

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ankle-deep in the shallow water Theodoree, lit from behind by the first light of the sun, her hair a halo above her golden head, was bending down with her arms about the neck of the young Apollo.

Pero and Calder jumped from the wall on to the soft sand to join the dozen who were already running into the shallows.

Madden stood by himself on the top of the wall with his head shaking gently.

"I can't do it," he muttered to himself. "I couldn't do it justice. I haven't got it in me, and nobody would believe me, anyway." And he began to adjust his camera.

The crowd was in every state of dress and undress. Chrysostomos, the miller, had one half of his face covered with lather, his shaving brush in one hand. Papadopoulis was in a singlet. There were two men in pyjamas, and another with a rug wrapped round him.

More windows were opening, more doors. All Mykonos was pouring out now and the shouts were echoing back from the water up through the streets.

Calder reached the statue and began to shout at once: "Careful! Keep back. Don't hurt it."

It sounded almost as if he were speaking of something alive, and in the sunlight it looked alive. The glory of the morning shone from the wet rays of the fillet. The young face, eager and eloquent with life, was stretched up to it. The parted lips laughed at it and the whole taut young body seemed to reach up from the arching back of the great dolphin in a moving, breathing salutation to the sun.

Half the town was there by now. Along the quay they were clustered, leaning dangerously outwards like passengers in an overcrowded ship. The narrow beach was crowded to its limits, the shallows were full of people. The children, the small boys, dressed and undressed, swarmed in the waist-deep water.

Theodoree had disappeared.

On the land Calder heard men calling for what his limited Greek told him was a bier, but he could not believe it was a bier until he saw men running with one of the shoulder-litters that they used for carrying the ikons of the saints. Somehow he got the crowd to stand back from the statue, got four of the more dependable, less excited men. Lifting with their hands plunged under the body of the dolphin, they raised it, and the bier was slipped beneath the bronze.

It was lifted on to the shoulders of the men, and, with Calder walking beside it to steady it on the one hand and Pero on the other, they began to move up the quay.

Theodoree appeared again. Holding the hem of her white frock bunched in front of her and walking backwards as they neared her, she began to scatter rose petals in the air.

The procession grew—gay, excited, brilliant with noise and laughter. They were halfway up the length of the quay now and out of the narrow alley that led up to the hill came Father Stavros, robed, black, immensely tall.

Theodoree went up to him like a young Nereid. "St. Nicholas brought it," she said. "St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas! The statue of Mykonos, the statue of Mykonos!"

FOR the first time in his life Father Stavros made up his mind upon the instant. As the statue stopped in front of him, swaying gently in the sunlight, he said: "It is the miracle of Mykonos." And began to chant in his deep voice the first words of the Doxologia.

In the procession a voice joined in and another and another, and the chant swept down the crowd, and the whole of the little curve of the bay was suddenly full of melody.

Then Father Stavros turned and, clothed with a visible dignity, walked up the quay, and the procession followed him, and the singing spread up the hill and out across the water.

Opposite the pale blue doorway of the little Chapel of St. Nicholas Father Stavros stopped. "It will rest here," he said firmly.

Pero spoke to one of the small boys and he ran off.

They brought tables from the *taverna*, somebody brought cushions. The tables were placed together. The cushions were wedged under the rounded belly of the dolphin.

The crowd was singing again, this time a secular song. One of the bouzouki players had fetched his guitar. The small boy came back from Pero's house bearing a great purple velvet cloth bordered with a key pattern in gold thread. Pero spoke to the men and they lifted the statue once again. The cloth was spread out over the tables, falling from them magnificently to the ground, and on it the statue rested with an instant miraculous life.

THE singing was growing again, louder and louder. Three of the girls began to dance, the old island dance of Mykonos. Others joined them, hands on shoulders. They formed a ring. The men were dancing, too. A rhythmic hand-clapping began to come through the singing.

From the window above somebody thrust out a flag and another joined it, and another and another. On the outer edge three small boys came carrying an enormous bundle of bunting, the flags that were slung to the lamp-posts of the quay in festival. Almost before they were aware of it they were ringed in flags, the white of the buildings was brilliant with colour.

Father Stavros opened the doors of the little chapel from within and came out dressed as for the mass, a small boy robed as an acolyte in front of him, carrying a silver bowl of holy water, two more swinging censers.

The guitars, the singing, the dancers stopped. There was for an instant a silence so profound, so absolute, that the cry of a startled gull high above them all was like a door hinge opening in the sky. And in that silence Father Stavros began an ancient, majestic chant of thanksgiving.

Some of the women knelt, some of them stood, their heads bowed, their hands limp; some of the old men growled back the deep responses; and in the still air the flame of the little lamps that the children had carried out burned golden and insubstantial.

The mayor was behind the priest now. Behind him again was a group of the senior men of the council. Someone had fetched the insignia. Order was with them again. The voice of the priest went on, out-reaching and resonant; the responses were firmer now and fuller, the chanting richer.

Then suddenly it was over, and the holy water was trickling down the sand-rubber surface of the bronze that smelt of seaweed and the sea and all the lost years of time.

And out of the police post came Nicomachos and the chief of police. Long before they reached the statue the dancing had begun again, the singing and the gold. It was Nicomachos who led the way into the *taverna* and came out, his arms loaded with bottles of wine. It was the chief of police who carried the glasses.

Someone had made a wreath of flowers for Pero. She was standing, circled by the dancers, enchanting and enchanted—as if at last she, too, was caught in the stir and whirl of things, as if she was lifted so high that she was loosed for a moment from the weight of earth.

And Father Stavros, looking over the heads of the moving girls, called out for the last time: "Pero, what must I tell your father *now?*"

"Tell him"—her head was flung back and she was laughing in the sunlight—"tell him that what he said of Guido was right. Tell him that what he said of the Italians was right. Tell him that what he said of me was right—and tell him that I am going to marry my Englishman." And she stretched out her hands to Calder over the heads of the dancing children.

THE END

"Boy On A Dolphin," by David Divine, is published by John Murray at 10s. 6d.

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WALES, poet's corner of our Island, home of the great Eisteddfods. Here flows the Wye, famed for its salmon. Majestic mountains and placid valleys dazzle the eye with beauty. Ancient strongholds tell of a turbulent past. At Caernarvon our warrior King Edward the First gave his son to Wales as their Prince. From the south comes the fuel to power the world.

It is a land traditioned by ancient holy men, bards and minstrels, and by the great deeds of the mighty Llewellyn and the Glendowers, former Kings of Britain. It cradled our royal Tudor dynasty.

The Welsh love of their land is as strong and steadfast as their mountains. They are independent minded, fervent in their beliefs, still faithful in their rural districts to their ancient language. They have a mental penetration second to none. And on mountain pass, in sheltered valley, in busy mining area, and by the rolling Atlantic, the little red Brooke Bond vans will be seen—evidence of a people's sound judgment.

* * *

Brooke Bond have thousands of acres of their own tea gardens—more than any other firm of tea distributors in the world—with their own buyers in all the big world tea markets. Brooke Bond is the only tea firm with five blending and packing factories in the United Kingdom. Each serves its own part of the country, and the little red vans, always a familiar sight, become more and more in evidence every week delivering fresh tea to over 150,000 shops.

Over 50 million cups of Brooke Bond tea are drunk every day

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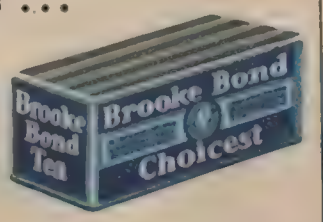
In each packet of 'Choicest' and 'Edglets' you will find one of the 'Wild Flowers' picture card series by John Markham, F.R.P.S.



MR. MORGAN'S HAPPY DAY

Continued from page 19

little funny. It's psychological, Henry. They crave to be young again, because of all the things they missed when they were. I've read about it. They get sort of brainstorms." She gave a mock shiver, and a little laugh. "Isn't it a warning to have all the fun you can while you still can?"

Henry agreed.

When she had left him, he walked back to the stores. The pavements were crowded, and all the young couples looked to him like Rosemary and Bill Trevor.

"It's psychological," he murmured wryly to himself.

He turned through the main entrance of the stores. The liftgirl smiled at him and asked: "Top, Mr. Morgan?"

"Yes," he absently replied, not noticing her.

In his office he reached for his in-tray, murmuring: "To work, to work." But Miss Jules came in.

"Yes?" he asked absently, reading a letter.

"It's Mr. and Mrs. Bruce. They've been waiting. . . ."

"Bruce? Bruce? Oh, yes. Well send them in, then," said Henry irritably.

Miss Jules remained standing there. "Mr. Morgan," she began nervously, "would it be poesible to let her go?"

Henry stared with astonishment.

"I mean," stammered Miss Jules, "they seem so fond of each other. . . ."

She broke off, and almost ran from the office.

"Well I never," said Henry to himself.

The Bruces filed in, followed by Miss Jules. Henry waved them to chairs. The man's face was pale.

"Mr. Morgan," he began, making an effort, "I have had a long talk with my wife, and we have decided not to call in my lawyer. My wife realizes now the seriousness of what has occurred and we both agree that the only thing to do is to face it—together."

The wife, Henry saw, was looking at her husband with docile trust. Henry wished a woman would look at him with such trust. Or perhaps it was love. She must have been pretty as a girl.

"If you please," continued Mr. Bruce, "I think you had better telephone for the police."

He had finished making the effort to say it and he turned slightly towards his wife and put his hand on hers. She smiled tearfully, leaving every decision to him. Henry glanced awkwardly down at his desk. He found himself hoping that, twenty-five years hence, Rosemary and Bill would look at each other like that.

There was a little sighing sound from Miss Jules. Henry looked up and she was gazing at him, pleading with her eyes, almost trustfully.

To his surprise, he said what he had had no intention of saying. "I'm glad you didn't call your lawyer. I think you should take your wife to see her doctor. Take her now, Mr. Bruce."

"But the police?"

"There are times when the less fuss the better. Let's say no more about it. No, please don't thank me."

He saw the dazed gratitude on the woman's face. He took, with embarrassment, the man's handgrip. As they were going out, Henry called: "Oh, Miss Jules."

She turned back, looking at him with gratitude, almost with affection, it seemed to him.

"Yes, Mr. Morgan?"

A name suddenly came into Henry's thoughts. Sally. Yes, that was it. Sally. He also remembered that the staff ball was only a month ahead and he would be asking her to dance. This year, she would be surprised to find that he really could dance.

"The letters, Sally," he said, smiling pleasantly. "We really must get on with our work."

Miss Jules gaped at him for a moment and then replied happily, "Yes, sir. The letters. Yes, certainly, Mr. Morgan." THE END

It's The Custom . . . in STRETTON

Collecting Wroth Silver. Later, there is hot rum and dancing

Pay up—or forfeit a red-nosed bull

CHARLES DOCHERTY, licensee of the Dun Cow Inn at Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire, has a stock of dozens of long-stemmed clay churchwarden pipes. "They should last the Wroth Silver for a year or two," he says.

Every year at sunrise on November 11, St. Martin's Day, the Duke of Buccleuch's steward goes to a field at the top of Knightlow Hill. He is met there by a crowd of people, among them the representatives of twenty-four parishes once owned by the duke.

The steward stands, facing east, at the corner of a large stone. He reads out the names of the parishes, and, one by one, the representatives throw their Wroth Silver into a deep hollow in the centre of the stone. The amounts vary from a penny to 2s. 3½d., and total 9s. 4d.

Before the collection, the steward warns the crowd that failure to pay the Wroth Silver may mean the forfeit of £1 for every penny not paid or of "a white bull with red nose and ears of the same colour."

The custom probably dates back to Saxon times. In origin Wroth Silver was a toll paid to the king—from the seventeenth century to the Dukes of Buccleuch — for the right to drive cattle across certain lands.

The hollowed stone on Knightlow Hill rests on top of a grassy mound of earth about thirty feet square. This mound is said to be the grave of a Danish giant slain by Guy, Earl of Warwick, in 930. The stone is believed to be the remains of a monument which was placed there during the fourteenth century.

After the Wroth Silver has been collected, the crowd goes down the hill to the Dun Cow for hot rum and milk, and breakfast. The churchwarden pipes are smoked; there are songs, and sometimes dancing.

"I'm still good for an old-fashioned waltz," says sixty-five years old William Quarterman, who leases from the Duke of Buccleuch the field where the Wroth Silver is paid. The field—part of Quarterman's six-acre smallholding—is now the only land in the district owned by the duke.

"I can remember when we used to get breakfast and four or five tots of rum for a shilling," says Quarterman. "My father went to the Wroth Silver ceremony over fifty times, but I think he used to enjoy the breakfast even more."

APPROACH TO SUNRISE

Continued from page 27

up, as though he had once been shown how to mouth words but had never said them and now this was his first attempt.

"Brill Williamson," he said.

The barman looked at him. "Williamson ain't here," he said.

Haig did not move or speak for a while. Then he nodded his head.

"I'll stay a while," he said. "And my dog here, too."

So Haig waited. He slept for twenty hours and when he woke he sat in a tall hipbath and washed himself. He got some new clothes, and he dressed. He ate at the store and then in the biting clearness of the morning went down to where a pier was built out into the river.

The big canoe was not tied up. This was the river, and Black Wing and Williamson were still to come. They should have been here days before and must have had trouble.

He waited, sitting hidden in a patch of scrub on a rise where he could see the river up to the bend half a mile away. Red squatted with him, and his rifle lay under his hand. When the sun fell Haig went back, knowing that Williamson must make camp along the river before nightfall. In the morning, after a full sleep, he was a new man, to look at and in his strength.

It was on the third day that the canoe appeared. Haig saw it first as a smudge on the river, rounding the far curve, but he knew this was it. It was early afternoon and the sun struck golden gleams, like leaping fish from the water. The canoe came nearer, the paddler steady with his strokes.

Haig drew back closer under cover and watched. He could see Williamson now, and there in the bow was Black Wing, sitting impassively, looking ahead.

With the current strong, the canoe expanded rapidly in size and then was abreast of Haig. He stared at Williamson and then at the girl, and the canoe passed him, the paddle strokes sending it in towards the pier.

There was something so confident in the movements of the man in the canoe that Haig felt the anger suddenly hard and choking in his throat, and he knew that he would not shoot Williamson. He wanted to hunt him with his hands, to make his body suffer; and then, when he had finished, turn him over to the law, so that, for weeks, his mind would suffer, too.

He flung the rifle away from him.

Near the pier stood a tree, old and tall, and thick and lonely. Haig stood under it and watched the canoe come in and Williamson jump out and secure it. No people came, although they must have seen the canoe approach. This was Haig's play and there would be no interference.

Black Wing still sat unmoving in the canoe. Williamson went to her and lifted her, and Haig saw that her feet were tied and her hands behind her. There was the whole story before him. There was no need for questions. His lips trembled as he watched Williamson untie the thong from her ankles and lift her out of the canoe and walk her. This was how he wanted it, to know that what Williamson did he did alone, without complicity. He waited until they left the pier, and then he stepped out from behind the tree and stood looking at them.

When they saw him neither Black Wing nor Williamson moved at first, or spoke. Then with a cry the girl tore herself free and ran towards Haig, calling his name. Williamson turned and rushed back towards the canoe where his rifle was.

Ignoring the girl, Haig leaped after him. Williamson reached the canoe but Haig was on his heels and Williamson knew he had no time to bring up the rifle. He swung round, his hunting knife ready, and faced Haig. They stood for a fraction of a second facing each other. Haig felt the choking in his throat, and he gave a cry as a dog will when hunting, without volition. Then he jumped with his good arm outstretched.

Williamson came in at him and struck, and he was a quick and powerful man. But he should have thrown the knife while he could, for no man had ever stood against Haig in close fight. One-armed, Haig sidestepped the lunge and seized Williamson's wrist and pulled it sharply forward with the man's movement and then, lightning quick, pulled back and round against the momentum. He felt the wrist break and saw the knife fly quivering into the earth, and Williamson went to his knees screaming with pain.

Haig stood still while Williamson rose slowly and turned, staring stupidly at his broken wrist and the hand lolling as he supported the elbow. It was not enough. The hate still flamed in Haig and his nerves twitched his fingers in the urge to punish Williamson.

Black Wing stood with her eyes fixed on him, and he looked at her and then at the motionless Williamson and gradually, as a deep stillness follows a high wind, he became calm.

PEOPLE had gathered and stood in a circle, not interfering, waiting for his move, and as he looked at them he knew he had finished and there was nothing more he wanted to do. The law would hang Williamson and that was now enough. He looked for Red and called him and the dog came. He moved away a little and sat down, his hand fingering the deep fur of the dog's neck, and watched them lead Williamson away up to the police post. Black Wing came beside him.

"He might have killed you," he said.

Her grave black eyes looked full at him. "It would have been better."

"No," he said. "This is better," He put out his hand to her black wings of hair but before he could touch her she took his hand and put it to her heart. It was the simple gesture that has no implication except of deep understanding and sympathy, but Haig felt a new warmth flowing into the cold caves of his being.

His brother murdered, and his hate sharpened like a claw by his exhaustion of effort across the mountains, he had not thought to have any relief but the short ecstasy of revenge on Williamson. And now there was a warmth flowing inside him.

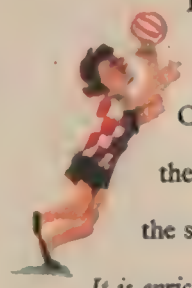
His brother had taken this girl from her people; now he must care for her.

"Come," he said, and signed to Red, and the three went slowly up towards Sunrise. THE END

They're only young once

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG—*remember?*—we never seemed to get enough of the best things in life. Parents felt that even a little of what we fancied would bring us to no good.

Let's not make the same mistake ourselves.



Children love buttered Hovis toast, and the more they eat the better, for Hovis is the slice of life.

It is enriched with eight or nine times extra wheatgerm—the life and heart of the wheat, the prime source of zest and energy. That's why Hovis is so good for you and yours—and why it TASTES so good.

Hovis is the slice of life

—have some every day

CUT OUT THESE SUPPLEMENT PAGES ALONG DOTTED LINE. FOLD OVER AT CENTRE TO FORM A BOOK

FOLD AT EDGE OF PICTURE

A JOHN BULL BOOK CONDENSATION

Land of the MOONFLOWER

by GERALD SPARROW

WHEN, in the summer of 1930, I went to Siam to serve as a judge of the International Court, Bangkok, I never expected that my duties would compel me to witness a double execution—the beheading of a young girl and a man by the sword. The executions, which were to end an extraordinary murder case, occurred shortly after my arrival, and I was still a young man at the time — twenty-seven.

Murder was a crime we seldom had to deal with at the court. The Siamese are almost one hundred per cent Buddhist. Murder is the antithesis of the gentle Buddhist creed and the Siamese are reluctant to admit it has ever occurred. Even the newspapers avoid the word, which is regarded as gauche and rude. "Lady fatally shot," "Old

woman passes away strangely." Such are the headlines.

I was, therefore, all the more astonished, one Monday morning, on entering the judges' room with my two Siamese colleagues, to see on the trial list one case down for four days' hearing. It was described, quite bluntly, as murder. There were two accused—a man and a woman.

When we mounted the bench, the two accused rose and faced the court. The man, whose name was Sarakarn, was a tall, handsome Pathan with pale blue eyes and a pointed beard, dyed red. His face was sensitive and intelligent, his movements quick. It was with something of a shock that I noticed his hands. They were too large, and extremely powerful. They looked as though they could choke the life out of you.

The girl, sitting close to him, appeared to be a Malay. She was certainly beautiful and seemed very young. I glanced at the charge. Her age was given as seventeen. Sumihta was her name. I studied her carefully. Her bold, brown eyes were experienced, her head stood proudly on fine shoulders, and her neck was lovely—delicate, yet full. Perhaps her most striking feature was her mouth, for her lips turned up at the corners, giving the impression that she had savoured life and found it sweet.

The accused were described as British subjects. The man, Nai Sarakarn, a wealthy merchant, was accused of murdering his wife, to whom he had been married twenty years. According to the charge, he had stabbed her to death with a butcher's knife while she was still sleeping. The motive was said to be his overpowering passion for the young girl. Sumihta was charged with conspiring with Sarakarn to commit the murder so that she could legally become his wife and inherit his property, an important portion of which had been in the name of the dead woman.

The two of them faced the prosecutor with considerable composure. When a telling point was made against them, Sumihta would turn to her lover and smile as if to reassure him. Their composure seemed well justified, for I read, in Sarakarn's written defence, that he would call four independent witnesses who would swear that on the night of the crime he was with them at Ayuthia, about fifty miles from Bangkok, playing cards in the house of a friend.

There was, moreover, some circumstantial evidence—whether it was genuine or faked we did not know—which seemed to support the defence theory that Sarakarn's wife had been murdered while attempting to resist robbers who had broken into the house. A lock had been smashed and some jewellery and money were missing.

The prosecution, too, did not lack circumstantial evidence, and it was damaging. Sarakarn had been infatuated with Sumihta for more than a year. Her love for him had consumed her to the exclusion of all else, and she had been faithful to him from the first day they met.

Sarakarn was busy during the day, but usually returned home at dusk, and shortly afterwards it was Sumihta's habit to leave her own house and walk the short distance to Sarakarn's fine bungalow. There she would stay with him until midnight, while his wife wept in the kitchen, not daring to enter the living-room.

Sometimes provoked beyond endurance, the wife would rebel and storm at Sarakarn and the girl. When this happened, Sumihta would seize an oxen whip that hung on the wall and hand it to Sarakarn, who would beat his wife. Neighbours said they had heard the woman's screams, and a little servant girl went into the witness box to swear that if Sumihta was not satisfied with the punishment her lover inflicted, she would snatch the whip and beat the old woman frenziedly until she crawled away, broken and utterly subdued.

Sumihta did not deny most of the allegations. She admitted she was Sarakarn's mistress and intended to become his chief wife. She also admitted, smilingly, that she had encouraged Sarakarn to beat his wife "to keep her in her place." But she firmly denied any murder plot. I still have my note of her evidence in its English translation: "We did not want to kill her. She was very useful, kept the house clean, and was a good cook. I was going to keep her on as a servant."

The real reason for the killing was revealed by one of the last of the prosecution witnesses, Nai Pramote, a young Siamese official from the Land Registry.

Five years previously, Sarakarn had transferred two valuable pieces of land to his wife as part of a plan to avoid taxation. On two recent occasions he had applied to have these retransferred to his own name, stating that his wife agreed. The officials refused to retransfer without the wife's consent in person, and Sarakarn had been unable to persuade his wife to come to the Registry. Moreover, Nai Pramote, who was deputy registrar, had been dissatisfied, and had visited the wife secretly at her house one evening to find out the real position.

Sumihta was already in the living-room with Sarakarn, and the young official met the wife on the large back veranda where most of the cooking was done. Nai Pramote said that the wife was nervous at first, but later talked to him freely and eagerly. Every night, just before midnight, she said, she had to make supper and take it to her husband and the girl. The little serving maid would follow her, carrying the wine. She had to take infinite pains with the cooking. Unless it was exquisitely done, Sumihta used to taunt her, and this she dreaded as much as the humiliation of seeing the girl's mastery over her husband.

She refused even to consider transferring the land back to Sarakarn as long as he was Sumihta's lover. The deeds were the only hold she had over him and, perhaps, on life itself. "I only want my husband back," she cried. "For twenty years he was a good man, caring for me and giving me a present on our wedding day to show he had not forgotten I was his wife. I am true and loving to him, and he had no women until this young witch came."

Nai Pramote had been touched by the wife's sincerity, and her humiliation upset him. How complete that humiliation was he could see when the time came for the supper and the wine to be taken to the lovers. Some ten days before, Sumihta had devised a new punishment for the wife. She must bring the supper as usual, but she must enter the room on her knees and serve it in that position, waiting beside the table until they had both finished. Only servants brought in food kneeling. Wives never did. Sumihta had achieved her aim of reducing the wife to the status of a servant.

Nai Pramote was shown a crack in the teak wall of the sitting room. "If you look through that," the wife said, "you will see what I have to bear."

His curiosity aroused, Nai Pramote had watched the whole scene. Sumihta and Sarakarn took nearly an hour over their supper and

exactly divined the police plan. A young officer approached, and I asked him what it was all about. He told me that a gang of robbers had arranged to burgle the house, the home of a wealthy man. They had actually collected in cash 40,000 ticals when the police, tipped off by an informer, had appeared. The gangsters had driven the police out of the house, but were now trapped there. He went on to say that they intended to set fire to the building and shoot the gangsters as they ran from the flames. It would be too dangerous to take prisoners.

The whine and screech of the firing rose to an angry snarl. A lorry arrived, bringing reinforcements with a machine-gun. I pulled Sunee back into the shelter of the door. The police raked the windows of the house with vicious bursts, but still their fire was returned. Then an unexpected thing happened. Further down the road three police were trying to edge nearer the house to set it alight. I saw something hurtle from the edifice. It was a grenade. It exploded at the feet of the leading policeman, who was blown to bits. The other two, terrified but alive, fled.

Now we saw that a third party of police, approaching from behind, were throwing burning faggots on the *attap* kitchen that adjoined the brick building held by the gangsters. Fire started, and we could see smoke belching first from one window, then from another.

"Now they'll have to run for it," announced Sunee with glee.

But it took a long time. For nearly an hour the gangsters, who must have been choking, kept up the defence. Then, in the clear, early darkness, the firing ceased. The house burst into flames and was soon a roaring furnace. Sunee was quite still now, waiting for the kill.

Ten seconds later, three men staggered from the door with their hands up. And then I saw the leading figure, a giant of a man, grotesquely smeared with blood. Instantly I recognized that weird lope. It was Sua Dam, the Black Tiger himself.

He advanced first, the other two following him a few paces to the rear. All had their hands stretched high above their heads, with the palms joined in the Siamese gesture. They were asking for their lives. The young police officer spoke to his men. Were they going to take prisoners after all?

Suddenly the three robbers sank to their knees, still holding their palms together. They buried their faces in the dust of the road. As they did so, a tremendous burst of fire from the police mowed down all three. Sua Dam was killed outright. The other two flopped on their bellies, but started to crawl to the gutter at the side of the street.

The police had now recovered from the fright and fury. They were chatting and smoking at the roadside. It had been a great victory. The press photographers came swarming in. They had been hiding much farther down the road.

We had just settled in the car and were moving off when a young Siamese girl came up. Did I know where they were taking Sua Dam? She was his wife and wished to take his body to the temple.

"He was very good to me," she concluded simply.

I suggested she apply at the police mortuary. The girl thanked us and went her way. So Sua Dam had been good to someone. Murderer, drunkard, opium addict and robber he may have been, but he had also shown himself a man of great courage and he had been good to his girl.

Sunee was looking at me intently and smiling. "You are sorry for the pretty little widow?"

"Yes, I am sorry for both of them."

Twisting herself in her seat, she said: "I think in some ways you are the most English man I have ever met."

It was my turn to smile. "He deserved to die—but, well, there is now no other tiger like Sua Dam at large."

The scene of the fighting stank now. It was the smell of carnage. We drove off. Sunee's eyes were shining, and she made no attempt to conceal the effect the battle had had on her. She started to hum a tune.

"You seem very gay, Sunee," I said. "Really, you are the most unpleasant woman I have ever known."

Sunee laughed at that. "I don't pretend," she said.

* * *

In November came the cooler weather. The rains had lingered but were now finished. Although I had by this time made up my mind to go, I found it increasingly difficult to leave Siam.

Yet I felt I had to leave. Nationalism and nerves had gripped Thailand. It looked as if the day of crisis, the struggle with Communism, was fast approaching. I had no desire to witness it. If Siam survived, as I hoped and prayed she would, the tension might be relaxed. In the meantime, as an old adviser of a previous régime and way of life, I felt I should not be too happy. The police were apt to interfere more and more with the business of La Roulette; a bill had been drafted to reserve the legal profession for Thai nationals only. I could not conceive that I should ever be other than a British subject. New laws and regulations restrictive of trade were a real strain on foreign business and a frustration to me.

The government naturally felt anxious concerning the Chinese half of the Bangkok population. Suppose their true allegiance were to Peking instead of to Formosa? This uneasiness caused the authorities to take unusual steps. Just before I left, a special branch of the police was organized to watch and to report on the foreign communities, including the Europeans.

I noticed now that one's friends, before making a comment on public affairs, would glance over their shoulders to ensure that nobody was listening in. This was not my Siam.

I had for five years written a weekly commentary on local events in the Thai press under the heading "Thai Telescope." It was candid but unbiased. Now, threats in writing began to come in. They all said the same thing: "Stop 'Thai Telescope' or we will stop you." I felt that this new ferocity of outlook was no part of the buoyant, easy Siamese nature as I knew it. I should leave, therefore, yet I doubted whether any foreigner had truly loved Siam—the authentic Siam without histrionics—more than I had done, and still do.

Chaluey was well provided for. After all those years of loyalty, she would have her own house and income. Moreover, as I looked into her tear-filled eyes, I vowed that I should visit the East again in a year's time. I was determined to see her once more, and I have since kept my promise.

This year, very quietly, Chaluey and I were married in England. THE END

"Land of the Moonflower" is published by Elek Books, price 18s.

royal page, dressing him in the white gauze coat with silver embroidery and the blue *panung* worn by that corps. For a year or more the diminutive creature sat on the floor with the other pages and carried out simple duties. But the effort of becoming a royal page was too much for him; he went into a decline and died.

I have read and reread the amazing evidence contained in the *Siam Society Journal* showing that these creatures continue to exist in our time. There is no doubt that, undisturbed by the war or by any government activity, they are still there and have possibly multiplied.

On our last night in Chiengmai we had a party for friends we had met in the north. Our usual fare was increased by three splendid sucking-pigs perfectly roasted, cold beer and rice wine and, fatal mixture, two bottles of Black Label whisky. Perhaps it was the warmth that this good food and drink generated that made Rada bold enough to do a parody of American and Siamese dancing.

She ran out, amidst great applause, and jitterbugged. But it was a jitterbug gone mad. All the primitive and idiotic characteristics of the dance were exaggerated and guyed. It was a wicked caricature.

Then she started Siamese classical dancing, and she did not spare it. The measured dignified rhythm of the dance with its slow but significant gestures was prolonged to breaking-point, her face retaining the mask-like passivity that the performances demanded. She took two minutes to raise her small finger and bend it back to touch her wrist. She finished standing still as a statue, her features in the graven mask they had assumed throughout.

It was almost too well done—the infantile jitterbug followed by the solemn boredom of the Thai dance. A storm of applause greeted her as she sat down to be toasted by us all. Then, before we went to bed, Chaluey sang a plaintive Malay love song. Shamra was heard to say: "Oh, if only India was like this!"

Verrier was equally nice, saying, "Gerald, you have brought me to a paradise. I did not know men could be so happy."

But next day our Dakota was waiting for us. Most reluctantly we waved farewell to our lovely and gifted Rada. As we became airborne, we saw her waving a little lace handkerchief until we were out of sight.

* * *

The routine at my office went smoothly along. La Roulette was popular and prospering, but over it hung the shadow of Sua Dam. He had threatened to return. He was a murderer. The police had so far been unable to catch up with him. We always had an uncomfortable feeling that he might shoot into La Roulette through the fence from the road.

Then, one night, he came.

I had not seen him enter, so quietly did he come in. He sat at the bar drinking brandy. Next to him sat an American marine, not in uniform. I felt sure that Sua Dam had come merely to reconnoitre, possibly with a view to robbing us on Saturday night when the cash takings were substantial.

It all worked out very differently. Sua Dam spilled his drink and accused the marine of jostling him. The marine was a judo instructor and Sua Dam soon found himself screaming in pain on the floor. He ran out, cursing terribly. I should have known he would return, but for some reason the idea never crossed my mind.

Anyway, back he came when only four guests remained in the restaurant. I saw him seize a table and hurl it with great force at a German whom he had mistaken for the American marine. The German was badly bruised and cut. Then Sua Dam, drawing his knife, advanced on him down the room. The dance floor was polished, and Sua Dam slipped. As he did so, his clasp-knife closed on the fingers of his right hand. He yelled and bellowed in fury, his dark face horribly contorted, but he retreated, throwing chairs, tables and glasses as he went. He stabbed a washroom attendant as he went out, then he pointed his knife into the back of a taxi driver who was waiting and ordered the man to drive him away, bleeding.

We called in the police and, accompanied by three of them, set after Sua Dam in my car. We eventually tracked him down to a house in the paddy fields.

The three policemen fanned out. As they approached the house, the sergeant called out in Siamese: "Come out, unarmed, at once, or we shoot." Within five seconds four men emerged from the house with their hands held high above their heads. The first was Sua Dam, still bleeding profusely from his knife wounds. The sergeant seemed disappointed, muttering "Sua Dam no courage tonight." But Sua Dam only smiled. He had no intention of letting the police shoot him on a trifling stabbing charge.

Next day, Sua Dam was taken to court and fined one thousand ticals (then £20). He was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, reduced by half for his plea of guilty.

Before I finally left Bangkok, I was to witness yet another of those startlingly violent incidents that I had come to accept as part of the pattern of life in that strange land.

It happened this way. One evening I was driving through the streets with a Siamese friend called Sunee, a gay and somewhat mischievous girl. It was nearly eight o'clock and very quiet.

Suddenly there was a report and that unpleasant whine which means a bullet quite near. We jumped out of the car and took shelter in a wine merchant's doorway. My immediate reaction was that another revolution had begun. I was mistaken. Eight policemen were crouching behind a wall in a small lane opposite us and were firing at a house to our left. Moreover, people from the house were returning the fire with deadly accuracy and the police had to be careful. We were out of the line of fire but could see everything. I asked Sunee if she wanted to go home. That was the last thing she wanted to do. She had recovered from her fright and, her eyes dancing with excitement, she now watched the cross-fire rather like a girl following the tennis at Wimbledon.

The police were using ordinary police carbines and one Bren gun. We watched the fight for nearly an hour, during which Sunee contrived to open some sherry I had bought and procure glasses and biscuits from a shop.

"We may as well be comfortable," she remarked calmly.

The battle died, then suddenly raged again. One of the police, over-bold, exposed himself unduly and was shot through the shoulder. His comrades gave a "Wah!" of fury and redoubled their fire.

Sunee kept up a running commentary on the fight. "There, you see, they are angry. And when they are angry, they will kill all the gangsters. They should set fire to the house and then shoot them as they run out."

We were soon to discover that Sunee had

Sumihta flirted while the wife knelt in the corner, her eyes averted. As they were finishing, Sumihta threw her shoes at the old lady as a sign that she was to go. It was the most insulting gesture she could make.

Nai Pramote was going to hurry away then, when Sumihta had started to talk to her lover, and the words uttered were so startling that he had remained.

"Kill the old woman now," urged the girl, "before it is too late and she ruins us by leaving the land to her own people."

As this awful evidence was given Sumihta showed her first sign of anxiety. Her supple little hands clenched convulsively, and she dug her long fingernails into her palms. Yet she gave her own evidence skilfully. After admitting the beatings, the "crawling" order, and the adultery, she absolutely denied the incriminating conversation and the murder itself.

Then Sarakarn entered the witness box and made his denial firmly and emphatically. His four witnesses, friends of his, took the oath on the Koran and were not unduly shaken in the cross-examination.

When the defence had given its version of the facts, it seemed certain that the case against the accused had failed for lack of sufficient evidence. Sumihta clutched her lover's hand and smiled at him, everything seemed within her grasp—a husband, wealth, the sole possession of her man. Then an unexpected thing happened.

The Prosecutor asked leave to call fresh evidence on the alibi. The evidence was startling. The police had traced a large number of one hundred tical (£10) notes from the account of Sarakarn at the Provincial Bank to each of the four alibi witnesses. In the case of one, the sum of five thousand ticals had been traced.

When the evidence of these bribes was given, Sumihta collapsed and had to be restored by a doctor.

Sarakarn was at a loss to explain the payments. He had no time to concoct a story. He broke down hopelessly. One technical witness was recalled. He testified that a spot of blood on Sarakarn's coat was human blood.

Now terror gripped the prisoners. The colour drained from Sumihta's face and she swallowed convulsively. Sarakarn held his head in his hands as if it tortured him.

The trial soon ended and, as was the custom in Siam, a date some fifteen days ahead was fixed for the judgment. The judges and I studied the file minutely. The final evidence, we all agreed, was convincing. Sarakarn must be convicted, but what of Sumihta? She was so young—and she had been in love. Was that to excuse her evil behaviour? She had planned the murder and had insisted on its being carried out. Without her there would have been no murder.

With extreme reluctance we decided unanimously that Sumihta must be convicted, too, and sentenced to death. In all our minds was the reservation that two higher courts would review our findings and, even after that, the King of Siam might exercise the royal prerogative of mercy, should our judgment be confirmed.

I think we were surprised when both superior courts confirmed the judgment and sentence, and dismayed when the government refused to ask the king to exercise his powers of reprieve in the case of Sumihta. The view was held that at last justice had been done in a most terrible crime.

I had not realized that, as a signatory of the judgment, I should be required to witness the executions, but such was the rule. On the appointed day, a Saturday, the two judges and I were driven to the place of execution on the outskirts of the city.

Executions were by the sword and were nominally private. In fact, they could be witnessed by a large crowd, for only a canvas pegged to stakes and not more than four feet in height surrounded the area set aside for decapitations. Over this canvas anyone, except small children, could get an unobstructed view.

At least five thousand people gathered to see the end of the rich merchant and his terrible lover. Within the enclosure were only the two judges, a police officer, two constables, the executioner and I.

The prisoners were seated on the ground, quite close together, their arms—as far as the elbows—secured to stakes behind them; their legs tied to a piece of boarding. Their hands were free and they could turn their heads.

The executioner, a watery-eyed, nervous little man with a drooping moustache, at first seemed upset, almost apologetic. He wore a suit of white, the colour of Eastern mourning, and a blood-red cummerbund.

I asked the police officer whether Sarakarn and Sumihta were to be executed together.

"No, sir," he replied. "The orders are that the man must be executed first, as he is the first accused. Then the girl, the second accused."

This was dreadful, but there was nothing to be done. The arrangements for the execution were out of our hands.

Sarakarn had apparently been drugged, for he had a bemused look. Not so Sumihta. I was told she had refused opium or alcohol, and her eyes protruded in horror as she turned her head first this way, then that, watching the executioner with a fearful fascination.

He was sharpening his great lemon-shaped sword on a stone and taking his time about it. He eventually got up and, twirling the blade above his head, advanced with rhythmic steps and postures to where Sarakarn was bound. It was not a dance but a death shuffle; he made exactly the same movement, which must have been traditional, each time he advanced on his victim and each time he retreated.

On his fourth approach he brought down his blade into Sarakarn's neck. Cries of dismay and derision escaped the crowd. The executioner had bungled horribly. It took him two more hurried strokes to achieve his purpose.

Sumihta gave a terrified scream that seemed hardly human. On the orders of the police officer she was given an injection in the leg, but it appeared to have no effect. Her fear and frenzy were beyond drugs. The executioner had been angered by the taunting of the crowd and the slur cast on his professional skill. Her eyes dilated with horror, Sumihta watched him retire to the back of the enclosure, where he deliberately drank a bottle of rice spirit, neat.

The drink made a new man of him. No longer an apologetic craven, he became the chief actor and hero of the scene, determined to win the applause of his audience. He sharpened a fresh sword and started his ritualistic death walk with much firmer steps and with exaggerated postures which made the mob laugh wildly. The spectators were now reacting to his every movement. It had become a public holiday. The show was on.

He threw his sword in the air and caught it. Cheers rent the air. He executed an imaginary

figure with one ferocious swipe. The crowd roared. And then he advanced behind Sumihta, who was straining the ropes binding her in order to catch a glimpse of him. The executioner turned this into a game, dodging her field of vision, coming up close behind her and patting her head. He was now thoroughly enjoying himself and in no hurry to take his bow. Seven times he advanced behind the girl. Each time, believing it to be her last moment, she would clutch her neck and scream as the citizens yelled their delight.

The seventh time he struck with great force and accuracy. Sumihta's head leaped from her shoulders. The crowd burst into a wild ovation.

The two Siamese judges were tremendously shaken by the scene. One was very sick. We hurriedly signed the papers certifying that Nai Sarakarn and Sumihta had been executed.

As we drove away, the crowd fell silent. One of the constables picked up Sumihta's head and reverently stooped to place it again on her delicate shoulders. On the way home we spoke not a word. Each of us was trying to cleanse the nightmare from his mind.

On the few occasions when violence and sudden death impinged on my life in Siam, I found it almost impossible next day to believe in their reality. The climate and the people were partly responsible. However hot it might become by ten o'clock, the early mornings sparkled with gaiety. The garden of the house which my wife and I had rented in Bangkok was green and washed with dew; the flowers had their hour of bright abandon; pigeons and parrots kept up a melodious chorus.

And then the servants were so happy. Kian, watering the lawn, would be singing to himself. The indoor servants would chant as they went about their housework, or brought us our breakfast in the shade out of doors. The serenity of the Siamese, who surrounded us with smiling faces as they worked, dispelled all grim experiences of the day before and swept us into a world where the sun was for ever shining. And Buddha would look after tomorrow. . . .

Barbara and I—we had married shortly before leaving England for Siam—had both held the view that two domestics would be ample for our needs. My wife was young; she could cook and sew; I should be at court all day. We had soon discovered that the servant problem was to resolve itself quite otherwise.

Tok, a former taxi driver, had somehow attached himself to us as a chauffeur. He had introduced Kian, the gardener. Kian had introduced his wife, Plien, who could wash. Plien had brought along Mae Prik "to look after Mem." When I asked Barbara what she meant, she replied: "I think she is going to be my maid." Barbara was right. The only vacancy now left was in the kitchen. Working on the principle that my income came from the Siamese and should therefore return to them, I decided to have a Siamese cook.

Tok objected strenuously. "Please, master, no. Siamese very clever people, very *special* people, but not cooks—not of European food. Siamese cook just not understand. But Chinese know all the tricks. Cook very very European food."

"Yes, Tok, but I don't know a good Chinese cook."

"Please, you wait here two minutes, I bring one."

Ah Lim was fat, about forty, and dignified. On three small charcoal chatties, using a converted kerosene tin as an oven, he could turn out quite superb meals at any hour of the day. European and American women, with all the expensive gadgets they can persuade their husbands to pay for, often turn out fare which Ah Lim would have given to the seven Siamese cats and kittens who roamed, aloof and proud, around the house.

Tok's driving was positively arrogant. Only one cavalcade would subdue him. If we saw the canary-coloured cars of the king, he would draw up and wait quietly by the roadside, hatless, until the king or his envoy had passed by.

Twice in the first month I had caught sight of King Prachadipok, as he went on his way to some function or other. I had the impression of a neat, simply dressed, alert man, who seemed to shun the more glamorous trappings of Eastern monarchy. I knew he was an old Etonian and had given a famous garden to his school. I also knew that he was the last man on earth to retain absolute hereditary power of life and death over all his subjects. An Etonian despot struck me as a little incongruous. I greatly looked forward to meeting him and seeing for myself how English education and autocratic power combined.

We had not long to wait. Two weeks after our arrival, the Secretary of the Ministry came to hand me, personally, a gold and white invitation card. In Siam all documents in the king's name were regarded as sacred and not to be left in the hands of a junior official. The card read: "His Majesty the King commands the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow at the Throne Hall on Thursday, July 27, at 8 p.m."

The great palaces of Bangkok are of three kinds: the royal residences such as the Dusit Villa where King Prachadipok lived; the Grand Palace; and the Throne Hall in which this reception was to take place. The Grand Palace was essentially Siamese in character, with nearly a square mile of temples, pagodas, offices, living quarters and gardens. The sublime temple of the Emerald Buddha is housed there.

The king's private residences were for the most part modern or in process of being modernized, but the Throne Hall, now the Assembly building, had been built of marble very much on the pattern of the Capitol building in Washington. It was the work, some thirty years earlier, of Italian architects.

The Italian painters who decorated the interior, particularly the roof, believed in angels with trumpets and they believed in colour. The enormous dome is gold and its effect is to bathe the entire building in a saffron haze. Barbara and I looked up instinctively to see where the golden glow came from. We were both enchanted.

We had been standing talking for nearly twenty minutes when the red and gold teak doors at the far end of the hall opened. Conversation stopped; the ministers moved to the front of their sections.

The king entered. He was slim, active and brisk. Smiling, with ease and charm, he started to make his progress round the Court, stopping to chat with his officials and friends as he went. He was simply dressed in a white coat, without orders, and a crimson *panung* with white stockings and shoes. He seemed, by reason of his simplicity and spontaneity, almost deliberately to dispel the aura of majesty and power that surrounded him.

As he approached, his titles passed through my mind. "Maha Mongkut Prachadipok, Lord of Life and Death in the Kingdom of Siam, Lord of the Nine Umbrellas, Lord of the White Elephant, Upholder of the Buddhist Faith, Teacher

thing happened. A man entered, a Siamese, but very tall and muscular. I thought at first he was drunk, but he wasn't. He was walking on air. I had seen the weird exaltation before. It was born of opium and drink taken very closely together.

When Chaluey saw the intruder, she stiffened in anxiety. I asked who he was.

"It is Sua Dam."

Sua Dam, the Black Tiger, was the most notorious gunman in Siam. Why had he come to La Roulette? The underworld avoided the Angelus and La Roulette, the two expensive night clubs of the town. But tonight Sua Dam was above his station.

Sua Dam beckoned Mr. Baumer to his table. I saw them converse and Mr. Baumer shake his head. Later, Mr. Baumer came to report: Sua Dam had offered to "protect" La Roulette and had been turned down.

Sua Dam greeted the police table affably and joined them, apparently on the best of terms with the young officers. It was then that I saw his face. Cruelty and vice were stamped on it in repose. When he smiled, the evil which he exuded subsided, but did not disappear. He had black hair that grew thick and low over his forehead. He wore European clothes—a tight-fitting, lemon-coloured shark-skin suit. The guests started to leave, but Sua Dam continued to drink his brandy. Just as I was going to take Chaluey home, he rose and lurched, with a curious loping gait, to our table.

"Nai, you boss here?"

"Yes."

"I see you again. Yes, I see you again."

"As long as you behave yourself," I replied equably.

His hand shot into his pocket. I expected him to draw a gun, but he changed his mind and made for the door. One felt that an evil spirit had departed.

That night Chaluey raised her hands to her face with fingers parted, and prayed to Buddha. When she had finished, I asked her what she had said.

"First I said the prayers we always say. Then I asked Buddha to guard you all your days and make you love me always."

My ventures grew and prospered. The legal practice and the lucrative hobby of La Roulette kept me fully occupied often until the early hours of the morning. Chaluey said I must take a holiday, a long weekend at Hua Hin.

We were already packed when I received a telegram from my friend Verrier Elwin in India saying that, accompanied by his Indian friend Shamra, he was coming to visit me and hoped to see Northern Siam. We cancelled our Hua Hin trip and planned a visit to the northern capital, Chiengmai, instead.

We flew to Chiengmai in a Siamese Airways Dakota. We stepped out of the plane into a new world, the cooler, simpler, unsophisticated world of the Lao people whom the tourist agencies have so far left in peace.

Chiengmai had enchantment. We stayed at the government rest house and visited the small and quite deserted gymkhana club with its nine-hole golf course—("This hole, sir, to the left of the buffaloes, but to the right of the cobra that guards the green!")—and its memories of generations of Englishmen who, in the prosperous days of the forest leases, had brought their sports and customs to this remote corner.

It was not, however, a nostalgic little European community and club that Verrier was after. Both he and Shamra were deeply interested in the life of the people and their remarkable heritage of culture, for everywhere there was evidence of its Indian origin. We went to see some northern classical dancing. Here were all the Indian characters of the *Ramakian* in a Thai version—Phra Ram, the great king; Hanumarn, his monkey general; the lovely, fickle Seda, wife of Phra Ram, stolen by Tosakarn and eventually freed by Hanumarn, only to be seduced by him. The plays delighted Verrier, and so did his photography of a new architecture.

A girl called Rada joined our party. She had been educated in America, was attractive, lively and a born guide. After she joined us, the holiday went even more gaily. In the evening Chaluey would arrange an orgy of local food: sucking-pigs (always roasted whole), and all the Lao dishes, which included some excellent spiced sausages and, of course, rice wine.

Our most memorable expedition was our visit to Chiengdao and its caves. We arrived at the Chiengdao temple and caves early, soon after eight, in time to see the priests returning to their monastery, each followed by his small serving boy, but himself carrying his begging bowl laden with rice and other cooked foods. The word "begging" is, in fact, inaccurate, for it is the priest who honours the donor by receiving the daily gift.

We had lunch in a glade above the temple fish pool, facing the pagodas, in the mountainside whose shadow was reflected with a shimmering faithfulness in the waters below. The fish, a species of carp, large and indolent, were, of course, never caught or killed. They were Buddha's fish and therefore protected. They would come out of the water to take bread from one's hand, then swim lazily away until the next offering was made. There were no sounds except our chatter and the strange noise of the forest, that remote but unmistakable chorus of faint susurrations that I have never heard recorded.

It was then that I told Verrier the story of the *pee tong luang*, as curious a true story as I know. The word *pee* means spirit, indicating that the humanity of these creatures was not acknowledged, nor was the fact that they were animals.

The journals of the Siam Society contain nearly but not quite all that is to be known about the *pee*, who inhabit the farthest border district between Siam and Indo-China, and are not more than half human size. The startling fact about them is that their hands and feet are human in form, while their heads and arms retain ape-like features.

I told Verrier that no females had ever been seen, but a number of people, of whom the most reliable was a former Danish forest officer, had glimpsed males. No photograph had ever been taken, but one male had been captured and brought to the court of King Chulalongkorn.

At first he had been tethered in a compound, put out to graze and fed on bananas thrown to him by the pages. But the pages were not always kind to him, sometimes forcing him to do tricks he resented. A kindly chamberlain had rescued the little creature and cared for him. The chamberlain insisted he was human, for he said the *pee tong luang* could talk—not very clearly, but he had some co-ordinated sounds to express fear, pleasure and anger, and also to indicate he understood. Very soon the official had taught the little man—if man he was—a few simple Siamese words.

The chamberlain was proud of the accomplishments of his friend, who he was now quite sure was human, and he decided to make him into a

hair was a dark brown, the colour of her eyes, which were large and expressive. When she smiled, her whole face lit up with a radiance that was irresistible.

Chaluey was longing to go with me and see La Roulette, but after dinner she produced a bottle of port and a Havana cigar because, as she charmingly observed, "During the little time I have been with you, I have noticed that these both make you happy." We adjourned to the upstairs veranda to have our coffee. Chaluey threw a pillow on to the floor beside my chair, then, with her quick, lithe movements, came to sit beside me.

"I have something I ask you to do," she began. "Tomorrow, Siri, the son of Kian, the gardener, and Lat, his friend, will be taken into the priesthood for three months, as our young men are. Now the Siamese custom is that they should visit their elders and protectors the day before, ask forgiveness for all sins and receive a blessing. I had long talks with Plien, the mother of Siri. She was afraid that you would not understand, but I said"—and here Chaluey's eyes looked at me questioningly—"that you loved the Siamese and would like them to come. You see, it is a little ceremony, and we do not know if a foreigner has seen it before. In any case, I can help you. May they come up now?"

I asked her to call the two young men.

"Remember," Chaluey whispered. "You forgive them everything."

Two grave youths with closely shaven heads came up the stairs. I would hardly believe they were the gay and careless lads I already knew. They sat down on a mat on the polished teak floor and smiled, smiles of complete serenity.

Siri approached me first, raising his hands together to his forehead in supplication. Then he brought his forehead to the floor three times and intoned in Siamese some words that begged forgiveness for all transgressions.

I replied in English: "I am glad you are following the Thai custom and entering the priesthood for a while. You have always been dutiful and a good friend. Any careless word or deed is forgiven gladly."

Chaluey touched my hand, and I felt she was moved and happy that a foreigner had understood. Then Siri handed me the offerings—the candles and the lotus flower—in a silver bowl. I accepted the bowl and gave it to Chaluey, who returned it to me. She pressed something into my hand. It was a hundred-tical note. I placed it under the lotus. It would help with the party at the temple next day when the novices became full priests. Siri touched the floor three times as before with his forehead and the ceremony was over for him. Lat went through an exactly similar procedure. The whole ritual, carried out with natural charm and dignity, had taken less than fifteen minutes.

Chaluey looked at me and said: "That was very, very good."

From what I saw of those two young men, both that evening and twice later, when I visited them at their temple, I became convinced that Buddhism had an almost magical effect on its followers. All thoughts of women, wine and cards, which had hitherto filled the minds of Siri and Lat, had gone, to be replaced by an effortless serenity. Even on that first evening, though not yet priests but with Buddha's kindly shadow over them, they had achieved an amazing dignity that seemed to come from deep spiritual satisfaction. With their cropped skulls and calm faces they had become images of the Buddha himself, aloof yet kindly and all discerning. I thought how few Christians ever look like Christ or even reach a Christian standard of living.

As I watched Siri and Lat walk down the drive on their way to pay homage to their grandmother who lived nearby, I was sure that the change in them was radical, not superficial, and would endure until, as old men, temptation no longer beckoned and beguiled.

Now Chaluey had to change for La Roulette, and there was much commotion as Mae Prik ran up to help her into her red and gold *prasin* and rose-coloured jacket. Plien cut an orchid from the garden for her mistress's hair. Soon we were on our way.

La Roulette was a large building open at the sides to allow the maximum of ventilation, and set in a landscaped garden with a lake, an island and a connecting bridge. The floor was highly polished, and a huge revolving roulette wheel acted as bandstand. The bar was modern and gay. We were greeted by the Dutch manager, Mr. Baumer, a courteous and able man who ran the club with clockwork efficiency. Four Chinese boys, numbered for some reason 1, 5, 7 and 8, served all the guests. Two Chinese were in the bar, and a French-trained Chinese cook presided over a large kitchen.

We had been dining only half an hour when the band began to arrive. Mr. Baumer introducing them to me. First came Kelana, the Indonesian band leader, with his pretty wife, Lilian. A mixture of Burmese, Japanese and English, she was the chanteuse.

Lilian was perfectly sweet. Both she and Chaluey had long red fingernails, perhaps an inch or more in length, and they competed in nail culture and in new ways of doing their hair. Lilian could sing only sweetly—"like Doris Day." We could not persuade her to sing with sophistication.

"In the end, Mr. Sparrow," she would say, "men like sweetness above all else."

So—sweet it was, sweet and low, and the success of La Roulette seemed to prove that Lilian was right.

The restaurant was near the band on a raised dance floor. At the other end of the room, near the bar, were the twenty dance hostesses, all either Siamese or Malay. They were trim little figures and danced perfectly. Being well off added to their happy, care-free frame of mind. They could all speak a little English, both in the original and in the American version. Just before my return, an American marine had taught one of them the sentence: "Don't *wurry*, kid—it's okay." This they had adopted as a slogan.

Chaluey and I opened a bottle of vintage champagne to celebrate.

The guests began to arrive—Siamese, Chinese, Danes, Frenchmen, Americans, British, Indonesians, Italians, Russians. There were never less than a dozen nationalities in La Roulette, and often between fifteen and twenty. We had only one rule to cope with this nightly surge of customers. It was this: no discrimination of race, rank or class—and it worked very well.

The boys started to fly hither and thither with their trays loaded with glasses. Very soon all the Roulette girls were dancing. As I had not met them yet, they waved to Chaluey and me as they passed our table. I noticed a party of police officers, not in uniform, who looked cheerful and prosperous.

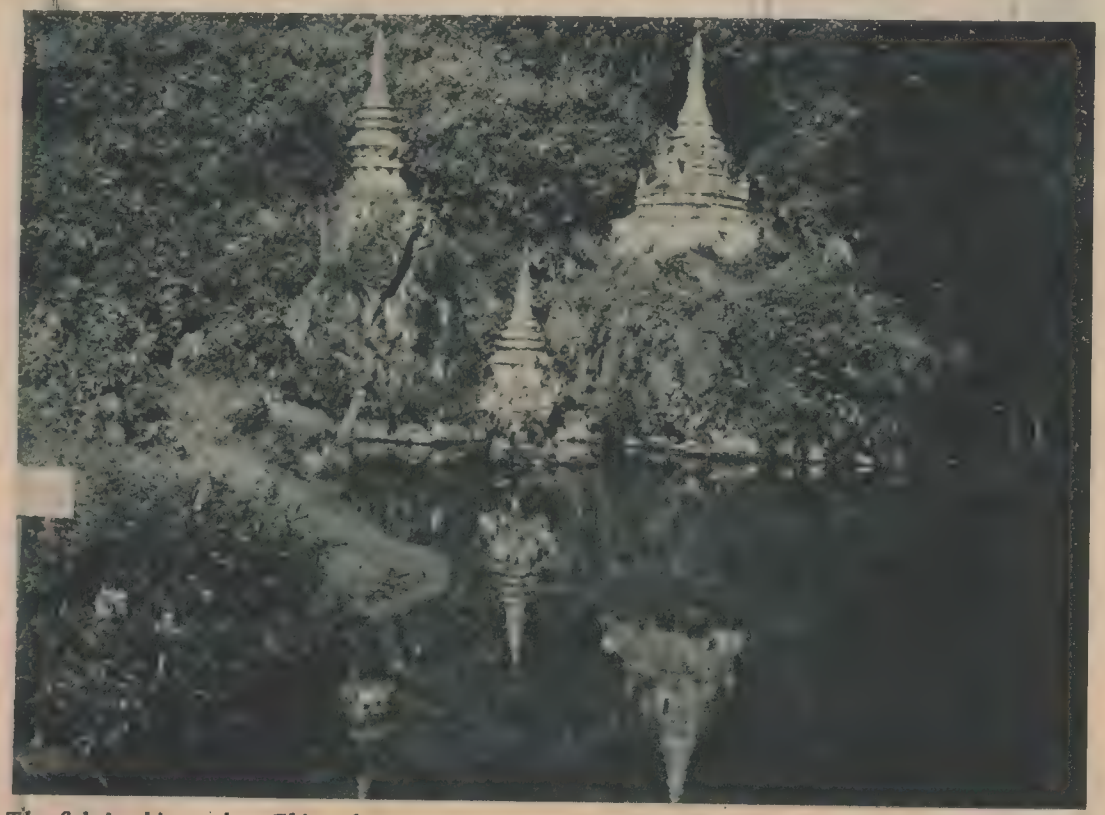
Kelana really let his trumpet roar. Lilian sang "You belong to me" with a sweetness that permeated the whole room. And then a strange

At a dance, Sparrow met a gay Siamese girl, Chaluey. Soon she was running his ménage

Lilian sang at Sparrow's night club. "Men like sweetness above all else," she told him

In his uniform as a judge in the International Court, Sparrow goes to meet the King of Siam

Dancers at Sparrow's night club mime a scene from the Ramakian, *an ancient Indian saga*



The fish in this pool at Chiengdao are protected as Buddha's fish. They take bread from the hand

wearily. Then, at last, the fortunes of war turned. No one had to tell us. We knew. Our allowance was increased from sixpence a day to £10 a month. The food became appetizing. Beef replaced buffalo in our menu. Yong Siang's activities were winked at. Visits from friends were permitted, and the Siamese began to smile at us again.

The end came with unexpected swiftness. I was working in my garden very early one morning, spreading manure over some fresh-dug land. A side door of the camp, immediately behind me, suddenly opened and I turned to see who the caller might be. A British soldier stepped through. There was no mistaking that buoyant bearing. I was dressed in a pair of soiled shorts and old canvas shoes, naked to the waist, but he came straight to me, saluted, and said in the purest cockney: "Excuse me, sir, we've just arrived. Have you any sick here?"

Then I did a very stupid thing. I fainted.

An hour later, restored by a dose of Yong Siang's medicine, I was washed and brushed and ready to receive, with all my fellow prisoners, General "Bill" Slim as he entered the prison in the largest Daimler I have ever seen in Siam. General Slim gave us a grand speech and then left to take the surrender of the huge Japanese force—over five divisions—that had its headquarters in Bangkok.

We organized a victory ball in the great hall of Vachiravudya College. Every description of flag was produced—flags of the British Commonwealth, flags of our allies. And in the very centre some diplomat had placed the old White Elephant flag of Siam.

The Siamese—bless their hearts!—had joined us, just in time.

After my release from camp I visited the Ministry where I was greeted with friendly smiles, was assured that a job awaited me and drew 55,000 ticals in back pay. I spent the night in the Trocadero Hotel. Next day, as I was entering a taxi, a white bus stopped nearby, and out of it jumped an agile little woman with a wizened, smiling face. It was Mae Prik, who had "looked after Mem."

She had been on her way to the camp to tell me that there was a suitable house vacant just near her own. It had been occupied by Japanese who had been arrested on a charge of torture. She sprang into my car and we drove off in the direction of the Lumbhini Park. Crossing a bridge, I saw for the first time the charming green and white teak house that was to be my home for the rest of my sojourn in Siam.

The Eurasian owner was anxious to rent it, and we hastily signed a year's tenancy agreement. I took possession. There was hardly any furniture, for the former Japanese tenants had left only some beds and a large assortment of brightly coloured mats, but Mae Prik was bustling about, dusting, cooking supper and singing lilting little songs in Siamese.

I had a home, a job and a bank balance, all within forty-eight hours. My next step was to make a garden and collect some furniture and servants. The servants presented no difficulty, for during the morning, Kian, the gardener, with his wife, Plien, and their family—increased by two—turned up. They had just freed themselves from their temporary German employer. Before I sat down to a curry luncheon, there was a hoot in the drive, a car drew up outside. There, smiling and apparently no older, was Tok.

He took charge at once. "This morning, master, I buy you a car." He pointed to the huge Hudson in which he had arrived. "Very cheap. From Japanese. You pay them what you like."

I set Kian to work at once in the garden, helping him myself. We worked for hours, cutting the lawn, planting zinnias, petunias and balsam seeds, so that, in the short tropical winter, the garden would look gay and, yes, English. To these I added an assorted collection of cuttings that Kian produced mysteriously from neighbouring houses—frangipani, hibiscus, cherries and the great white moonflower that was to permeate the garden for many years with its clinging, feminine fragrance.

Our labour was not wasted. Very soon my garden was to be one of the most attractive in Siam, an effect of cool serenity being achieved by Kian's meticulous cutting and trimming and by his constant watering to keep the lawn fresh and green.

Then I met the most attractive Siamese girl at a dance. Chaluey was her name. She was fair and gay and had the happiest laugh. Soon she was running my ménage. I had settled down as a Bangkok resident.

It was the middle of January before I felt like working again, and then I reported to the Ministry. The Minister offered me a contract for a further ten years to complete twenty-five years of service, but, he added, as the International Court had been abolished, and it was not proposed to revive extraterritoriality, there were no duties for me immediately, though some would be found.

I was, in fact, being offered that long-forgotten post, the valuable sinecure. I felt I could not accept it. I had an idea that I could earn my own living. I sought out a Chinese engraver and ordered a brass plate with black lettering which read: The Law Office. Mr. J. W. G. Sparrow, B.A., Ll.B., Barrister-at-Law.

In a fine office lent me by the kindly, urbane Swedish Consul, Folke Endstedt, I sat back and waited for clients. They were soon forthcoming. Trade was on the move and the Law Office soon became well known.

My life had certainly moved fast in the early days of liberation. Yesterday a prisoner; today an established and extremely busy citizen.

April was approaching. The courts would close for the legal recess, and I wanted more than anything else to see my own country again. I had been away for seven years. England would be the perfect change—cold, wind-swept and rationed—but with the countryside softened by the fitful sun and gladdened by the first spring flowers.

My month in England was spent in London and in Devon where I stumbled over the crags and through the swamps of Dartmoor, and explored the headwaters of the Dart and the Teign.

It was at the end of the third week that I experienced that minute irritation that I could only put down to boredom. My thoughts turned again to Siam, with its warm, ripe life. Before the courts reopened on May 4, clients would be coming to consult me. More important still, during my leave I had purchased, by cable, La Roulette Restaurant and Night Club, which was just opposite the British Embassy in Bangkok. La Roulette was famous from Colombo to Pearl Harbour, and I wanted to see it in action.

Without delay, therefore, I made arrangements to travel on the first available plane to Bangkok. Within a few days I was on my way.

Chaluey was at the airport to meet me, and it was good to see her so happy. She was lovely to look at: fair as the northern Thai are. Her

save the King, but we have locked up his minister in his own legation." And the colonel gave the most unpleasant laugh it has been my misfortune to hear.

After I had spent ten days under house arrest, a Japanese major arrived with two cars. "Pack two suitcases," he said. "In fifteen minutes you leave for internment at the university."

On the way to the prison I asked my captors if I might stop for five minutes at the polo club, which was on our route. To my surprise they agreed.

I hurried to Sai Sunee's stable. There she was, her ears pricked, her eyes as intelligent and expressive as ever, and her chestnut coat agleam in the sunshine. I fondled her warm silkiness in a farewell gesture. I was never to see her again, for three months later a few drunken Japanese troops were to have some sport at the polo club. It took an odd form. It was then the time of the Chinese New Year, when hawkers were selling crackers in the street. The soldiers tied a cracker to the tail of each horse in the stable. They then opened the stable doors and lit the crackers. Soon a careering, terrified stampede of horsesand ponies was tearing round the polo ground at breakneck speed.

Then the shooting began. At first the Japanese used revolvers. Next they turned a machine-gun on to the beasts that had not fallen. Years later I met a witness of this incident. He told me that Sai Sunee was one of the last to fall. The laughter of the Japanese, who thought it all a great joke, rang through the night. They did not even finish off the wounded survivors next day when they were sober again, but left them to die of thirst and loss of blood in the scorching sun.

At the university building, where a camp had hastily been erected, I made a quick tour of the prison. It was heavily guarded by armed Siamese police, and measured one hundred yards by eighty. In this enclosure 450 British, American and Dutch prisoners had been herded.

That evening I talked with a Siamese police captain on duty. He was a gay young man, but I saw him in a serious mood. He was thinking of the future. "Bad situation for Siam, Mr. Sparrow."

"Oh, I don't know. You have your powerful ally."

"Too powerful. If Japan wins, she can eat Siam before breakfast."

"And if she loses?"

The police officer glanced over his shoulder to make sure no one was listening. "Then we must pray to Buddha to give us a golden tongue to explain how it all happened."

He had admirably summed up the Siamese attitude on the extraordinary events of the week.

The Siamese had not been too happy when they came into the war under direct duress. The Japanese ambassador had said: "Join us and you can run your own show. The fruits of office will continue to be yours. We shall not interfere with Siamese internal affairs. We must, of course, shoot traitors and thieves. The army is a law unto itself. If you betray us, we will, the same day, clamp a rigorous military government on Siam."

The answer, not unnaturally, had been, "We agree." Within a month Siam had been forced to join Japan as full ally and to declare war on Britain and America.

This ferment outside the barbed wire of our compound made the first month of imprisonment pass quickly, but the pace soon slowed down and then time began to drag intolerably. We started to do those things we had always wanted to do but had never had time for. An accountant would begin to learn Chinese dialects; a missionary would read the more brutal books of the agnostic critics; a bank manager would cultivate orchids. I myself wrote plays, comedies, thrillers, revues, pantomimes, whatever could be produced for the entertainment of my fellow prisoners.

Entertainment and hobbies, however, were not enough. The three hundred men in the camp needed drink. It was not easy to procure. It was, in fact, dangerous; but it was done.

Our supplier was a Chinese, Yong Siang, who had the most crooked smile imaginable. As if by contrast, he was straight, even generous, in his dealings, appearing to enjoy the intrigue more than his modest profits.

He provided two types of rice spirit. The better brand was "Mehkong," at three shillings a bottle. "Mehkong" whisky labels bore the brave motto, "Not a drop sold until three months old." The cheaper spirit, which the Siamese call "Lao rong," was 1s. 6d. a bottle and was a white, unadulterated rice wine.

Yong Siang could not at first enter the prison, and the acute problem arose—how were the large consignments to be brought in? It so happened that at the time we were debating this an elderly prisoner died of typhoid. I learned that a coffin was being made for him by relatives in the city. We applied for permission to collect the coffin and to stand guard over it in the camp. Duly impressed by our reverence, the Siamese authorities agreed.

Before we took possession of the coffin, Yong Siang had, of course, contrived to fill it to the lid with liquor.

As we passed through the main prison gate, swiftly and with downcast eyes, a bottle broke and the coffin started to leak ominously, but, undetected, we reached the empty room where the coffin was to await the corpse. It took us four and a half minutes, thanks to an intricate organization that had been set up beforehand, to distribute the goods. Fifteen minutes later we carried the dead man, wrapped in an antiseptic shroud, to his coffin, which smelled a little of alcohol, placed him inside, screwed down the lid and mounted guard, with legitimate pride in a job well done.

I think we expected that an elderly prisoner would perhaps be taken from us at fairly regular intervals, thus enabling us to repeat our coup, but the health of the prisoners seemed to improve. True, there was illness. Typhoid, cholera and malaria were not infrequent, but in every case the patient would recover, thanks largely to the efforts of a devoted British nurse.

We called an emergency meeting of the liquor trust when stocks were running low. A scheme was devised for smuggling supplies over one of the prison walls, and this lasted for some time till someone informed on us.

For three weeks the whole prison was teetotal. Prisoners had the most blazing feuds. Then the rains came and once again we managed to circumvent our guards.

The rain was torrential and went on ceaselessly for fifteen days. The camp was under three feet of water—and Yong Siang was back in business, steering his drink-laden canoe on moonless nights under the barbed wire and right into the heart of the prison. He came with clockwork regularity, paddling his little craft with swift, silent strokes, and always we were there to meet him.

The months and then the years crawled by

and Protector of the Siamese People, of Siam and all her dependencies—King."

The king stopped opposite Barbara and me.

"How did you come out? Did you have a good trip?"

"We came by the Alsia, sir. It was most pleasant."

"How is London?" he continued. "Not changing too much, I hope? Plenty of fog?"

"Last winter the fog was in great form, your Majesty."

The king moved on, I bowed, Barbara curtsied. We had survived our presentation without mishap.

The king was followed by his only queen, Ramphai, a charming, smiling lady with much grace and good looks. About twenty of the great princes followed the royal couple. They were self-assured young men and I thought some of them looked arrogant. From their birth they had been told: "You are a prince. Everyone must show you respect. No one may touch your body. You may do anything that pleases you." And as children they had learned that lesson.

I realized as I stood there with my wife that we were seeing the end of an epoch. We had seen the king, Prachadipok, the seventh king of the Chakri dynasty and the last man on earth to exercise absolute hereditary power. Here were his relatives and entourage, and they reflected that plenary conviction of superiority that had a last flowering in the Kingdom of Upper Burma under King Thibaw and Queen Soupayalat before the British took over in Mandalay. The princes passed in a chattering, colourful group, following their only earthly master, the king. Uncomplicated, proud, arrogant and wilful—for better or for worse, we shall not see their like again.

The king completed his tour. Now he sat down with his wife and four princes at a raised table. When he was seated, two courtiers with peacock fans on long teak handles approached him on their knees and started to fan him—one slow stroke and three quick in the rhythm reserved for the king. Other officials fanned the queen. Coloured lights surrounded the royal table and dais. The effect was delightful, giving the impression of celestial beings taking their supper a little removed from the world around them, a world that beheld and applauded.

When the king was seated, we all sat down at the flower-decked small tables around the king's dais. Some excellent dishes prepared by the king's French chef were served, and the champagne flowed. The waiters, as well as filling all glasses immediately, always left one iced bottle on the table. The party began to be gay. Ten minutes previously all had been protocol and decorum. Now the bubble burst and excited chatter broke out. The ministers, however, still kept a wary eye on the king, lest he send a message or express a wish.

At length the king rose to leave. We all stood. The Siamese national anthem, composed by the bandmaster of Louis XV, was played. It is an anthem of dignity and power, reminiscent of the magnificent hymn of the Austrian emperors. The king bowed, right, left and centre. The Court bowed deeply. Walking with his characteristic simplicity and distinction, the king passed through the great doors, followed by his queen. The doors were closed; the blue and gold curtain was re-drawn.

Back home and thinking over the scene, I recalled how lightly and cheerfully the king had carried his responsibilities, and how charming the little Siamese princesses had been. Democracy and bureaucracy—the tyranny of the ballot box and the printed form—were unknown to these gay, spirited people. The king looked after them, and Buddha guided the king in righteous and gentle paths. Or so it seemed to me after enjoying the seduction of unlimited champagne.

Early in the spring of 1932 rumours started to circulate in Bangkok. They spread like wildfire through the government offices, through the dense Chinese markets, through the foreign business firms. The rumours all said the same thing—that soon great changes were coming to Siam, that there would be M.P.s elected by the people.

King Prachadipok followed his custom of taking his Court to the Hua Hin seaside palace for the hot weather of April, May and June. While he was there, the revolutionaries—led by Nai Pridi Panomyong, who is today in exile—rapidly completed their plans and, at one stroke, accumulated armed power in their hands. They forged the signature of the prince in charge of the military arsenal, sending an order to provincial garrisons that all arms were to be sent to Bangkok before June 15 "for examination, numbering and reissue." No one questioned the order. All complied.

Before dawn on the day subsequent to the return of the Court, the rebels struck. By ten o'clock every prince but one in Bangkok, including Prince Nakorn Sawan, the king's uncle, was arrested and locked in the Throne Hall.

The revolt marked the end of absolute rule by the Chakri dynasty. Nine months of adjustments and significant change followed. Then Barbara and I decided to take home leave.

On our return in 1934 we soon realized how deep were the changes that had overtaken the Siamese people, changes affecting their lives, habits, customs and thoughts. A sign of the times came very shortly after our return. I received an invitation to dine "quietly" at the Japanese Embassy. I was told that Nai Pridi Panomyong was expected. I accepted, interested to discover, if I could, what was going on.

I presented myself and was received with much warmth by the smiling minister, by his wife, and by perhaps half a dozen of his staff, with their wives dressed in the traditional evening kimono. I thought the women artificial in comparison with the naturally charming Siamese ladies, but their careful make-up and sweet manners had their own appeal. The men were very Western, talking of racing and golf, and shaking the driest of Martinis.

I had not been there five minutes when Nai Pridi entered. From that moment until he left he dominated the company by talking of Siam, its literature, its music and its architecture. The Japanese formed a Greek chorus, occasionally comparing a Siamese virtue with some equivalent excellence of their own country.

After the dinner the party became very merry. Innumerable toasts were drunk. The ladies, at some unseen signal from the minister's wife, had vanished. A troupe of Siamese classical dancers appeared, to dance to the accompaniment of the Siamese musicians who sat on the carpeted floor with their legs tucked beneath and behind them.

The discordant notes had an indigenous charm; the sparkling gold and silver dresses of the dancers accentuated their slow, sensuous movements. I watched their hands and fingers bend and twist in rhythmic interpretations fascinating to behold.

It was two o'clock when Nai Pridi left. He was smiling and content. The party was a success. I had the uneasy feeling, as Tok drove me home, that Britain had lost, not only her power in the

East, but her social hold over the minds and imaginations of Eastern peoples. The old love was off. The new infatuation was in its first rapture. The Siamese had discovered a great people, half Eastern, half Western, who treated them as equals and who clearly had the highest regard for Siam and her "New Order."

* * *

I found my work at the International Court fascinating. It was varied, but it followed a pattern as characteristic in its way as that of the High Court and the Old Bailey. We tried everything—civil causes, crime, matrimonial disputes. There was a bench of three—two Siamese judges and one British legal adviser. The advisers were appointed from the British bar, and were in fact judges.

The story of the court itself is peculiar, perhaps unique. What the lawyers call "extraterritoriality" was at one time common in the East. The great Western powers, particularly France and Britain, wished to secure for their subjects living in the Far East the benefits of French and British justice. In the colonies this was an automatic business. In free countries, including Siam, they claimed the right to try their own nationals—and Asiatic subjects—and confirmed that right in treaties. It was resented, but permitted and recognized.

I was first attracted to the problem of opium through my work in the courts, where I frequently came up against it. Returning from a court case at Ayuthia one November day, I joined the Chiengmai-Bangkok express. This was the train that linked the opium-growing north to Bangkok in the south, and it was the favourite vehicle for the smuggling of the drug.

It was past six as we approached the Bangkok suburbs and I strolled along to the dining-car to have a whisky-soda. The four Chinese boys were packing up. The head boy was handsome, with determined features which proclaimed him the boss. The other three were little squint-eyed Cantonese, and they were laughing and sharing jokes as they gathered together their belongings into leather suitcases. They appeared happy and carefree.

Next day I saw an opium charge in the court list, but I thought nothing of it until we mounted the bench. There, looking now considerably chastened, were the four Chinese.

They were charged with attempting to smuggle a large amount of opium—valued at £6,000—which the police had found behind pictures in the restaurant car.

All four pleaded guilty and each submitted a plea for leniency, for they were all married and two had small children. But there was not much we could do. The bench—perhaps wisely—was left little discretion in opium convictions. We had to fine the Chinese four times the value of the opium, reducing this by a half as a reward for pleading guilty, as provided for by the Siamese code of procedure. If they could not pay, they would have to go to prison.

This particular case made me feel uncomfortable. The little smugglers had been caught and justly punished, but what of the big operators who employed them? Who were they? Quite a number of people in Siam knew the answer but it was not prudent to speak. The drug gangs have influence and are firm believers in the silence of the grave.

Years later, by accident, I learned of the financial complexities of this case. The men behind the deal had paid a modest price for the opium in Chiengmai, then double-crossed their carriers, the Chinese boys, by employing an informer who collected on their behalf large rewards which more than covered the purchase price. The opium, though nominally seized by the police, eventually found its way back to the owners and was not confiscated. They sold it abroad for just over £25,000.

The case of the four Chinese boys intrigued me and stimulated my interest. I went out of my way to meet opium smokers, and it was with this end in view that I followed up an introduction to Ho Lim, the proprietor of a firm of machinery importers. Ho Lim was sixty, but he had a glossy, durable look. He dressed very smartly in European clothes which were made for him in Savile Row during his frequent visits to London. I was surprised when a friend told me that Ho Lim had smoked opium almost from boyhood.

We had met at a cocktail party and I had taken to him immediately. His eyes were bright and twinkled mischievously. He invited me to dinner the following week and I accepted. It was not until quite late in the evening that I managed to bring the conversation round to opium and its charm.

Ho Lim smiled. "Opium has a sinister ring in European ears, has it not? We don't think about it like that, though we deprecate excess, just as you do with alcohol. I have smoked since I was fourteen. My father taught me in order to keep me at home and away from the girls of the town. He kept me at home all right!"

"But what fascination has it for you now?"

Ho Lim thought for a moment, then, leaning forward, he said: "I will tell you. I have had several wives. I still have. I am prosperous and can afford it. But I lost my young wife—my only real girl—when she was eighteen, as she gave birth to my eldest son. With a little opium I can see her again, as she was when we were both poor and happy together. I can see her hurrying back to me through the years—and the dream is more real than life itself."

I looked at Ho Lim. I saw he was near tears, a display of emotion Chinese men do not permit themselves. Very soon afterwards I took my leave, thanking him for showing confidence in me by discussing his private affairs.

The fascination of opium for Chinese was one thing, but they were inured to it by centuries of addiction and could restrain their appetites. More dramatic and more deadly was its effect on Europeans who had no such protective tradition.

The British in Bangkok did not smoke opium, but many of the French did. One was Monsieur Nicot, a distinguished, able man who was a leading Bangkok architect.

Nicot called his house, appropriately, "Le Mirage." It was during my third visit there that he told me he had a Siamese wife. He introduced me to Rada. She was lissom and elegant, quite young and, though she wore Siamese dress, a Continental veneer was suggested by her make-up. She smoked Turkish cigarettes from a long ivory holder, but these were not all she smoked. Her husband had persuaded her to join him in his chief delight. She had been reluctant at first, but he had laughed aside her fears, so she had succumbed—a puff at the initial stage, then a pipe, then rather more.

One day, while showing me over his house, Nicot turned to me and said: "And now we are going to show you our den. That is the little place where we can escape, from time to time, from the absurdities and unrealities of life."

Rada unlocked the teak door and we were in a

charming light room. Monsieur Nicot had there collected his favourite treasures, including a fine head and shoulders of the Virgin Mary, some remarkable statues of Buddha in bronze and a superb etching of Rheims Cathedral. In the centre of the room was a divan, large enough for two persons, and beside this stood a Chinese black-wood table, intricately carved. On the table were seven silver-handled opium pipes and the little flame burner and pan used for preparing opium for smoking.

I asked Nicot whether I might watch how this was done. He smiled. "Why, of course, but perhaps if you are bored you will let yourself out, for—well, one cannot be disturbed."

Rada unlocked a cupboard and brought out the opium. It was in what looked like a sugar tin, with a Chinese "chop" (the trade mark of the merchant) on the lid. The opium was thick brown, treacly and pungent.

Her nimble fingers working dexterously, Rada moulded the opium into pellets, which she held over the flame until they sizzled. Then she filled two pipes—a large one for her husband, a smaller one for herself. Nicot sat on the divan and Rada stretched herself out behind him.

Within a few minutes the voluble, sophisticated Frenchman I had been talking to, and the elegant Siamese girl, became less and less interested in my presence. Rada would reach out to prepare more opium for her husband and always she would fill her own pipe, too. They reacted in different ways to the drug. Nicot retained a quizzical, detached expression, as if to say: "This is nice, but of course it does not mean so much to me." Whereas Rada, who had shown her first signs of animation when told to prepare the pipes, now showed ecstasy in her face. At that moment she had forgotten me completely. She was sold to the drug body and soul.

I felt I was a trespasser in another world. Who was I to intrude on their golden dreams? I stole out of the room, ran down the passage, out of the front door, back to the reality of my own home.

* * *

I became interested in racing. In association with Luang Medhi, a judge, who had been at Trinity Hall with me, I raced Sai Sunee (Beautiful Lightning), a graceful chestnut imported from Australia. Ridden by Nai Chalaw, a gentleman jockey who was at that time champion of Siam, Sai Sunee won many races for us in the most exciting possible way, for she was a very slow starter with a remarkably strong finish.

I was quite happy with my work, racing, golf and other diversions, but I could not help realizing that Barbara and I were drifting apart. We very nearly tackled the problem together, but then an event happened that affected everyone's life. The second World War broke out in Europe.

My application, through Sir Josiah Crosby, the British Minister, to be used, possibly, in the Judge-Advocate's department at home, was refused. I was asked to carry on in Bangkok. That was not as easy as it sounded. The very idea of living in a neutral country, enjoying a quickened social round during the phoney war and, later, during the Battle of Britain, appalled me.

It was during this interlude that Barbara and I finally separated. At first it seemed incredible that the love we had vowed in the little parish church of Burbage could have grown cold. I felt that the fault lay in my own mercurial temperament.

There was much bitterness during the first unhappy phase, bitterness long since forgotten, and I was given a real insight into what actually happens when marriages break up—the human story of drift, deception, misunderstanding, so different from the ridiculous stories concocted for the courts with their mania for adultery. Anyway, Barbara returned to England, and we were divorced in the sordid slot machine of the London Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division.

Meanwhile, the tempo in Bangkok quickened and there was a wholly alien pressure in the Siamese atmosphere, though on the surface life went on as before.

I had noticed a significant increase in the Japanese population of Bangkok for three years past. Now the Japs poured in. One would see the stocky, smiling little yellow men with their kimonoed women everywhere. Japanese restaurants mushroomed. The staff of the Japanese Embassy was trebled by every description of attaché—military, naval and air, technical men and advisers, public relations officers, and just plain spies. Yet we seemed secure, for why should Japan, with her markets expanding in every direction, risk a major war? She held half China. Was that not enough?

The Japanese invasion took us completely by surprise. Sir Josiah Crosby summoned the British community to a meeting and gave the advice: "Sit tight. That is what I am going to do myself."

The Japanese landed in great secrecy during the night of December 7, 1941, at Bangpu, a village connected with Bangkok by twenty miles of concrete road. The Siamese cabinet, by a majority of six to four, decided not to fight. The Japanese ambassador had informed them that bombers were waiting at the Indo-Chinese border in case of resistance. In spite of this, there was fierce, short-lived opposition at certain points. The Japanese army, excellently equipped, was in Bangkok on the morning of December 8. In three hours, by these tactics of invasion and corruption, the Japanese had made themselves masters of Siam.

On the morning of the ninth, a very flustered Kian ran upstairs to say: "Colonel Ota, a Japanese officer, is here!"

I looked out of the window. A sergeant and three men in dun-coloured Japanese uniform were setting up a machine-gun in the garden.

I cordially detested Colonel Ota from the instant I set eyes on his crafty, cruel little face.

"Mr. Sparrow?" he demanded brusquely.

"Yes."

"Adviser to the Siamese Ministry of Justice?"

"Yes."

"Ah!" Colonel Ota thought for a few moments, then decided to amuse himself. "What would you do if I ordered my men to shoot you?"

"There is nothing I could do."

"You have no arms?"

"No."

"No what?" he snapped.

"No arms."

"I see. I am a colonel in the Imperial Japanese Army. I am always treated with respect. You will remain under house arrest until"—the colonel paused, then concluded ominously—"until we decide what to do with you."

Colonel Ota, who was accompanied by a young captain and a Siamese interpreter, moved off. As he marched out, he turned very suddenly, to find out, I think, if my expression had altered. It had not.

"By the way," he called, "you are a British subject?"

"Yes."

"I am afraid that will not help you. God may

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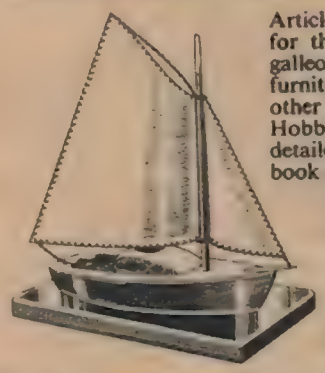

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R23

MISS DALLING'S WORD IS LAW

Continued from page 23

depots, keep track of vagrants and suspected delinquents through the reception centres and hostels, attend two courts a day, juvenile court once a week, and escort women prisoners.

She has taken the same oath of service as policemen, has the same powers of arrest, and performs any public duties, such as directing congested traffic, if necessary.

Pay ranges from about £7 10s. a week for recruits to £10 a week for a sergeant and £22 11s. for a chief superintendent. There is an allowance of 16s. a week in lieu of the free official quarters provided, and also eighteen days' annual leave and six bank holidays, all with pay.

Plain-clothes women must be prepared to deal with every type of case. Unaided arrests of drunks and wrongdoers are discouraged. It is part of the Home Office rule that policewomen should not be tough. But sometimes, armed with only her formidable ability to talk circles around the most hardened criminals, Sergeant Dalling has acted single-handed.

She once set out to arrest a garrulous husband who had received stolen money from his wife. At a coach depot, she found that the man weighed twenty stone and was about to leave town.

WHEN she made known her duty, the man laughed so heartily that he had to sit down. Sergeant Dalling laughed with him. At this he resorted to bad language.

"It's no good your swearing," she said. "I've got orders to take you in. And I'm *going* to. Don't think that just because I'm a woman——" The man broke in meekly. "All right, all right. If I don't go now I suppose you'll stand nattering at me all night."

"Most men give in gallantly," Sergeant Dalling says. But one, whom she caught operating a game of chance, bemoaned the fact that he had been caught by a woman. "I'll never live this down," he said.

A suspicious nature is as necessary to a policewoman as a good memory for faces. When a woman tearfully asked Sergeant Dalling for a night's lodging in a cell because her husband had forced her from their home, the sergeant checked police files and found that the woman was wanted for larceny.

Such enterprising work has led one noted criminologist to say: "Once the answer to crime was wireless and cars. Now it's women and dogs."

Much of Sergeant Dalling's work is unofficial, like the cure she prescribed for a little boy who delighted in reporting himself lost. Instead of taking him home in a police car, she used simple psychology and walked him home by a route that took two hours.

"Every case requires a different approach," she says. "I thought, when first I joined the force, that I would become hardened. But police work intensifies your interest in people and their problems."

LIKE most policewomen, she works best with women and children. But Nottingham's chief constable, Captain Athelstan Popkess, says: "Sergeant Dalling, like all my girls, will have a bash at anything."

Women recruits undergo the same training as men, studying police law and procedure, first aid, traffic control and self-defence at a Staffordshire training school. Sergeant Dalling, who was a nurse in a Nottingham factory, followed up the course with six weeks of practical work and was elected for C.I.D. training after five years.

According to a Home Office report, the turnover in policewomen is unusually high. During a recent twelve-month period in which 278 new policewomen were trained, 209 others left the force.

"Policewomen make good wives," says Sergeant Dalling, who is single. "But married women don't always make good policewomen." There have been several marriages between policemen and policewomen in the Nottingham force. On one occasion, a policewoman inspector, earning £800 a year, met and married a constable. She resigned at his request when they became engaged.

Her recall to temporary uniform duty has not limited Sergeant Dalling's activities as a crime detector. Although confined to the station during a current recruiting campaign, she still finds time to solve cases from her desk.

A wealthy woman reported the theft of a valuable ring to her recently. The thief was believed to be a destitute woman who had called at the house, begged a meal and, while her benefactor's back was turned, had stolen the ring.

The theft occurred late at night. Sergeant Dalling, assuming that the woman had no lodgings, telephoned the city reception centre and was told that the woman, or someone fitting her description, had asked for accommodation. "She went to her room a few minutes ago," the clerk said, "and left a call for nine o'clock in the morning."

The woman was called at 9 a.m. She left her room and went down to the lobby to check out. Sergeant Dalling was waiting for her. THE END

RICHES BY PIPELINE

Continued from page 21

modern Arabic Sur and Saida—lie southwards of Beirut on the Lebanon coast, each crowded into a promontory that juts boldly out into the sea. Tyre drowses on much as it must have done for centuries, a honeycomb of old houses, piled one on the other, and, below, a maze of high-walled narrow alleys. Water ripples in a gutter down the centre of the alleys, and here and there a door stands open in the high wall, revealing, astonishingly, some cool and gracious courtyard with a balcony and a palm tree.

With Sidon, twenty miles to the north, it is otherwise.

In the last few years, a whole bright new Sidon has sprung up as if by magic. There is a brand new street, three cinemas, new banks, filling stations, bookshops and, just outside the town, an enormous new hotel with a big roadside sign: *"Thé-Dansant—Plage."* Miles of new citrus and banana gardens have been developed along the coastal strip and, around Sidon in particular, their proprietors are busy encircling them with high walls.

There is money in the air.

And yet, passing quickly through all this, and entering the labyrinthine covered *suqs* (bazaars) of the old town, one could still in Sidon span the centuries in a moment of time. Donkeys plodded by, labouring under loads of merchandise. Black-veiled women flitted silently through the shadows. Blind men shuffled over the cobbles calling for alms. Immensely dignified old gentlemen in red tarbushes engaged each other in grave conversation, oblivious of the traffic that surged about them. Flocks of Arabs in billowing robes and black-corded *keffiyehs* haggled at stalls piled with silks or red slippers, silverware, spices or soap.

Stumbling on through this rich and crowded scene, threading my way through the maze of alleys, I emerged suddenly into the sparkling light of the seashore. Ahead, linked to the land by a broken stone causeway, the old Crusader fortress—"the Castle of the Sea"—arose from the waves.

I floundered through the fine sand towards the Crusaders' castle, which can be reached at low tide. Old granite columns, from some earlier Phoenician temple, studded its massive walls. The waves lashed against its sides. I climbed the wooden steps to the tower's door, and then on up the stone spiral staircase to the battlements.

FROM the top of the castle I could look out over the whole magnificent sweep of coast, the narrow strip of citrus gardens, the mountains rising steeply behind, Old Sidon piled on to its promontory, New Sidon outshining it behind. And when I looked to the south I saw that four ships, big ships, lay at anchor just off-shore. I saw by their shape that they were tankers. And that behind, on the lower slopes of the mountain, a cluster of squat cylindrical objects gleamed in the sun—the terminal tank-farm of TAPLINE (the Trans-Arabia Pipeline).

Here, then, was the source of ancient Sidon's spectacular rejuvenation. Here, too, was the genie of the Middle East's great boom. The all-powerful wonder-working three-letter genie: Oil.

Later that week I found myself standing beneath those tanks on that hillside; above we could see the black line of the pipe coming down the mountain, carrying an endless stream of oil, ceaselessly moving across a thousand miles of desert between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean shore.

There was a signpost on the tank-farm's edge pointing down the line: "Rafha—571 miles," "Quaisumah—754 miles," "Abqaiq—1,069 miles." The first two were pumping stations, the last, an oilfield. On its way to its Sidon terminal, TAPLINE crosses four Arab countries.

Below, in the terminal's office-block, the radio room was talking to the pumping stations deployed along the line. The terminal's American boss, Captain John R. Jones—his grandfather, he told me, had been a Menai Straits pilot—introduced me to one of his mooring masters, Captain James Kaye, from Glasgow. There are fourteen of these mooring masters at the terminal—four British, five Norwegian, two Dutch, one Italian, two Americans. They meet the tankers and guide them into the berths where they couple up to the submarine pipelines. Day and night the work goes on. The flow of oil never ceases.

The Trans-Arabia line, completed in 1950, is only one of the many which today rule their black lines across the Middle Eastern deserts. Seventy miles north from Sidon, at Tripoli, more tankers wait off-shore at the terminal of the Iraq Petroleum Company's two lines from its Kirkuk field, 532 miles away.

Seventy miles to the north again, at Banias on the Syrian coast, the I.P.C.'s new 30-32 inch pipeline from Kirkuk began operating in 1952.

THE genie, Oil, a mere wraith before the war, now looms to the most formidable proportions. In 1938, all the Arab countries plus Persia produced between them 16 million tons of oil; in 1953 the figure for the Arab countries alone was 120 million tons, about one-fifth of the world's output. More than half of the world's proved oil reserves lie in the Arab countries of the Middle East.

Steadily, through a thousand channels, this oil wealth seeps throughout the Middle East. New skills are acquired, a new industrial élite formed. When TAPLINE was under construction, 14,000 nationals of Arab countries were on the pay-roll. Flourishing communities have grown up around pumping stations in the middle of the desert. Bedouins come in their thousands to water their flocks at wells the oil-men have sunk beside their lines. Today there is a great business growing vegetables on irrigated land in Lebanon, Syria and the Jordan valley and trucking them down the road that runs beside TAPLINE to replenish the larders of oil families in the sweltering Gulf.

One of the great and most keenly-felt distinctions in the Middle East today is between the oil "haves" and the oil "have-nots." But if some have benefited hugely, *all* have gained much. I found both Lebanon and Syria busily engaged in negotiating increases of the rents and royalties paid them for allowing the pipelines across narrow strips of their national deserts. The Middle Eastern governments' cut of the profits has mounted almost as sensationally as oil output itself.

With oil money stopping the holes in state budgets, harvests expanding, trade booming and the new wealth slowly percolating downwards, one might expect to find that the Arab nations, if not completely sure of themselves, would at least present a picture of growing stability.

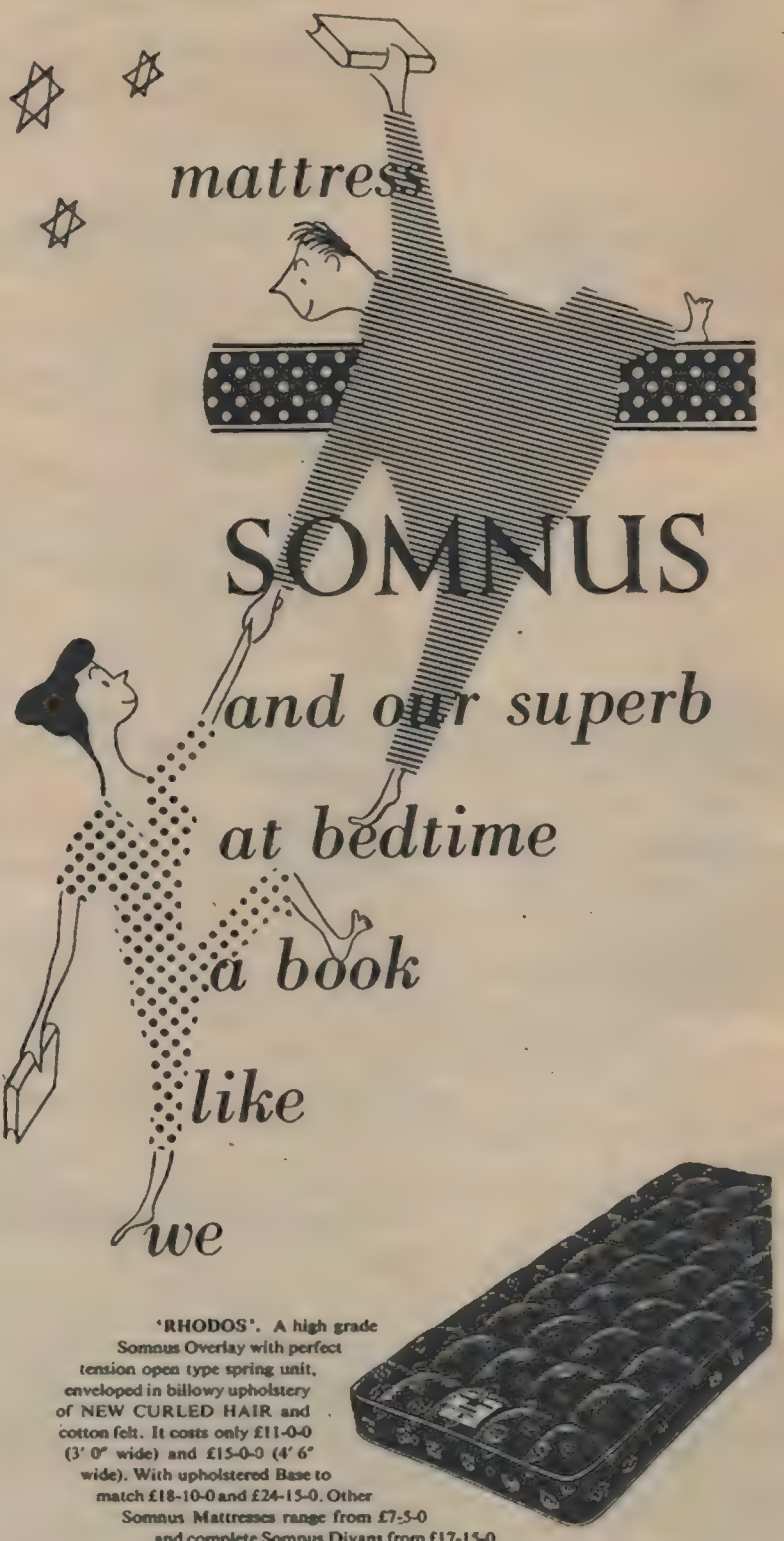
Perhaps they do. But it is a picture not particularly easy to recognize.

I arrived in Damascus shortly after the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army, Colonel Adnan Malki, had been assassinated by a young army corporal. The air was still vibrant with emotion as the rival parties flung taunts at each other. Scores of citizens had been seized and were in prison. Even the Lebanese press was being confiscated at the frontier. A motion had been introduced into the Syrian parliament for the suspension of parliamentary immunities. Another law was rushed to curtail normal legal processes.

But all this was old stuff—almost routine—in Damascus. Since 1949 Syria has suffered five military *coups d'état*. Bouts of constitutionalism follow bouts of military dictatorship with an almost monotonous regularity.

"Syria," as a Lebanese mildly observed to me, "has not yet found her path."

Parties splinter and form new alignments and splinter again, whirling around each other in a ceaseless dervish dance. The Druses, in their southern mountains, under their leader Sultan El Atrash—the scourge of the French—look on, biding their time. But today the only real power resides in the army—although its politically-ambitious



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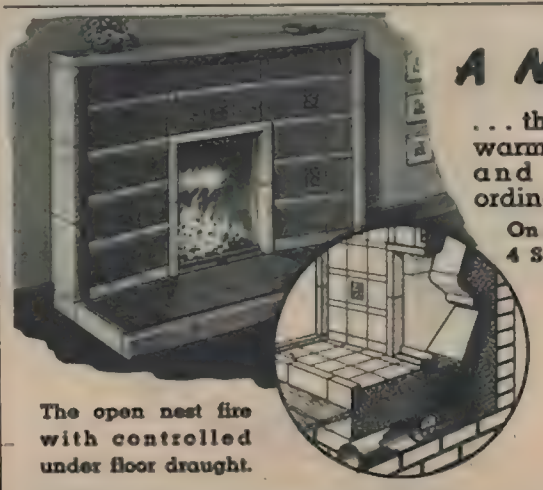

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officers are themselves divided by party.

Once again, after this particular crisis events followed the well-worn pattern. "Documents" were discovered. A far-flung plot, the government announced, had come to light. "A foreign power" was clearly implicated. The foreign power was unnamed, but it was made pretty plain that Dollar Imperialism had been at its nefarious work again.

The American ambassador hurried to the prime minister with an emphatic protest. It shortly emerged that the British-backed Iraq Petroleum Company had been "supplying arms" to "insurgent bands" which were still "eluding capture." And this, it seemed, as headline followed headline, was not all. Iraq, treacherous Iraq, had been preparing to annex Syria. The Turks were massing on the northern frontier. And even little Lebanon, that snake in the grass, was plotting hard to "isolate" her larger neighbour.

"You know," an English resident said to me, "I used to think that when they'd got their independence, things would be friendlier—the way it's happened in India. But, no—the xenophobia is as bad as ever."

THERE are weeks when a perusal of the Syrian press can only be compared to an excursion through the psychopathic ward of a mental hospital. Characteristic was the demand of one newspaper that all foreign ambassadors should be expelled because, in their sly way, they were always going to see leading ministers and attempting to influence them.

In the "Street-Called-Straight"—now Mihat Pasha Street—walls were still plastered with old election posters. One in particular sticks in my mind. It showed an heroic Syrian citizen, armed with two swords, valiantly warding off a bear stamped with the hammer-and-sickle, an octopus spattered with pound and dollar signs, and a viper, bearing on its scales the Star of David.

But if today it is in Damascus that this persecution mania reaches its most hysterical levels, it is in greater or lesser degree endemic throughout the Arab Middle East. And it is a serious disease. It undercuts growing stability. It frustrates constructive co-operation with the West. It distracts energies from those great development programmes which are the region's greatest need.

It calls, in short, for diagnosis. And the political psycho-analyst can have no better place to begin his probing than this ancient city spread beneath its bleak, denuded mountains. For Damascus is a city rich in memories for the Arab peoples. Under the Umayyad caliphs in the seventh century, it became the centre, in its first brilliant flowering, of a Moslem civilization that extended from Spain to Persia and beyond.

It was again in Damascus in 1919 that Feisal, acclaimed by a congress drawn from all over the liberated Arab world, set up the capital of what the Arabs dreamed would be a reunited Arab nation, risen from the ashes. For had not the Arabs, under Lawrence, fought on the Allied side? And, because of this, had not the British committed to writing their solemn promise that this should come to pass?

Yet, somehow, it was quite another dream, a hostile dream, the dream of the Zionists that triumphed; and in Damascus the Arabs watched their own dream crumble into dust, while Feisal, their new king, fled before the advancing French forces and the British and the French sat down and proceeded to carve up the Arab world into spheres of influence, ruling arbitrary frontier lines across its desert sands.

Perhaps, after all, no very profound psycho-analysis is needed to explain Syrian distrust of foreign motives. It is now ten years—that is, within the memory of many who are still children—since the French, loath to concede the independence they had already agreed, trained their guns on Damascus, bombarding the city, the mosque and the parliament house and killing a good many people.

True, the Arab nations are now free at last—and free to realize for themselves this haunting dream of unity. They are free on paper, but they are not free in their minds. For such wrongs are not easily erased. The clock cannot simply be put back. However unreal they were when they were drawn thirty-five years ago, the boundaries that divide the Arab have since then acquired substance.

Lebanon and Syria are French-speaking, republican. Iraq and Jordan are monarchies with administrative systems made in Britain. A whole great web of vested interests has grown up. It is no longer just the old feud of the Saudi Arabian versus the Hashemite dynasties; there is rivalry even between Hashemites now, for if Jordan and Iraq were united—as clearly they ought to be—only one king would be required. Similarly, if Syria and Iraq came together, it would be the Iraqi army—the bigger, better equipped force—which would prevail. And this is a prospect Syrian officers are scarcely likely to welcome.

Thus, every move towards the Arab unity the heart desires is apt to produce only greater disunity. Year by year the frustrations pile up, the jealousies multiply, the bitterness grows more corrosive.

IN the particular "plot" at this time shaking Damascus, the conspirators were alleged to be members of the P.P.S. (*Parti Populaire Syrien*)—an underground organization of Arab idealists, both Christian and Moslem, whose goal is the "Greater Syria"—a union of Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon (Cyprus is also sometimes included). But "union" is perhaps hardly the word, for the emphasis is very definitely on Syrian nationalism and expansion. The other countries are seen rather as being absorbed by the Syrians, the true heirs of Arab culture and civilisation.

Other unification movements place their all-important accents differently. To many Syrians, for instance, the famous Fertile Crescent plan—though to the outsider it may appear identical with the Greater Syria idea—appears as an attempt at annexation by oil-rich Iraq.

Meanwhile, slightly off stage, but always devastatingly audible through her highly developed press and radio, Egypt watches all potential rivals for the leadership of the Arab world with a jealous and jaundiced eye.

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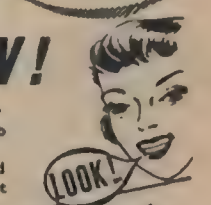

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briskly bubbling, stands Israel, the Trojan Horse within the gates—and a perpetual reminder in Arab eyes of the perfidy of the West.

Yet, though it thus appears at times farther away than ever, unification, or at least some form of federation transcending the present absurd political frontiers, remains the greatest need for Arab self-realization. And I found many Arabs who would argue that, despite appearances, their chances of achieving it are today better than ever before.

For the ordinary Arab—as distinct from his politicians—is now conscious as never before of his oneness with other Arabs across the frontier. Air transport, modern roads and buses, the operations of the oil companies, the radio and cinema—with Arabic films made in Egypt showing in, say, some remote village in Iraq—have made nonsense of the old divisions.

Unfortunately, what the ordinary Arab may feel does not yet matter a great deal. His voice is not heard above the political clamour; in fact, he has no voice. For the theoretical parliamentary democracies of the Middle East still lie under the heavy shadow of Ottoman pashadom. In the large areas of Syria—and even more in other Arab countries—landed families favoured under the Turkish empire still hold sway over great tracts of countryside.

Yet, slowly, all this, too, is changing.

In the booming economy of Syria there is a chronic shortage of labour. Slowly, the peasants around Homs and Hama are breaking loose from their traditional servitude and moving northeastwards to the petrol-scented, tractor-powered freedom of the newly opened lands of the Jezira.

Today, the parliamentary deputy for Hama, elected by the peasants' votes, is the able leader of the rising Ba'ath socialist party, Akram Hourani. To the astonishment of the older parties, the socialists actually went out to the villages and solicited the peasants' votes. Today most parties at least pay lip-service to the principle of the redistribution of the large estates. And provision for a strict limit on the land any person can hold has actually been written into the constitution—although, significantly perhaps, it has not yet been possible to agree on a figure.

Feudalism is passing. What Arab intellectuals call the feudal-mentality may take a little longer to disappear.

BEFORE leaving Damascus I made a trip through the Damascus Ghuta, accompanied by two Arab field-workers of the Near East Foundation. The Ghuta is the gift of two short rivers, the Barada and the A'waj—the Abana and Pharpar of the Bible. And how astonishingly green and lush the country was, with its tree-shaded roads, its orchards, its fine standing crops and the clumps of tall poplars, bordering the fields! For twenty miles the Barada flows quietly on, through its seven canals, and then empties itself into a small swampy lake. And, as it does so, this miracle of the Ghuta fades—and once again there is nothing but the desert and the wandering flocks.

We called in on several villages that day. The houses were mud-plastered and the lanes between them confined by high mud outer walls around the houses, shutting out the world. There was a clinic and a home-making centre in one of the villages. But it was not, of course, possible to see the class, because the girls, though perhaps only fifteen, were already veiled and in purdah.

It is not easy for a Westerner to realize just how shut-in Moslem society can be. It is not only a question of suspicion of the motives of people from outside the country or the village—but even of those of people outside the family. The doors in the high walls are closed. One may, perhaps, trust one's close kinsmen. But all others are potential enemies. One must be always on guard.

A European wandering around the Arab quarters even in the towns soon feels this weight of suspicion for himself. A hundred times I found myself being watched by hard, suspicious eyes. It is something I had never met in thousands of miles of travel in the happier lands of the Far East.

"We have to go very slowly," confided one of the Arab field-workers, "trying to open up their minds, just a little. We must hope then that they will do the rest for themselves. . . ."

In the villages I saw, this opening-up process was already well under way. New crops and better varieties were being grown. Artificial fertilizers, scarcely known a few years ago, were being used in impressive quantities. In one village, a local co-operative—co-operatives are still in their extreme infancy in Syria—was drilling a well to irrigate more land; in another, menfolk, turning out on a rota, were putting in a new covered drain.

The Syrian Government, encouraged by these pilot schemes of the Near East Foundation, is developing its own agricultural, education and health services. A United Nations agricultural and health mission is working with it; but in Syria, alone among the Arab countries, American Point Four aid has been rejected for fear of its strings.

MEANWHILE, as the villages of the Ghuta move forward slowly but surely into this modern age, Damascus remains the turbulent centre of the political typhoons that still sweep the Arab world. Military coups, successful or merely attempted, party splinterings and realignments, slogan-bawling student demonstrations, newspapers which print the wildest fantasies as sober fact—these remain the essential stuff of politics in the ancient capital of the Arab world.

"We are like Europe at the time of the French Revolution," an Arab explained to me. "There is social change going on all the time. Dissatisfaction everywhere. People are troubled and confused. It is like a man adrift in a rough sea. He grasps at the first log that comes along just to keep himself from drowning."

That log may be Communism, anti-Westernism, war against Israel—anything a man can hold to and escape the battering of the waves.

And yet—to pursue the metaphor—it may be that land is already in sight. For oil is the mightiest of all revolutionaries. And the social and economic revolution it has brought to the Middle East goes forward with mounting tempo. A new society is in the making. Before the war, Syria's western neighbour, Iraq, too, was constantly shaken by coups. But now as the Iraq Development Board employs the state's vast oil revenues in great constructive projects, Iraq—though her problem of mass poverty is worse than Syria's—seems to be finding her feet at last.

The politicians make the headlines; the technicians do not. But the technicians are a growing band; they are working all the time—and they have powerful allies. The Middle East today is being melted down and remoulded by forces beside which the most vociferous politician and the most ambitious colonel—and even the contending diplomats of East and West—are puny indeed. THE END

NEXT WEEK: Harry Hopkins visits Lebanon, the business man's paradise

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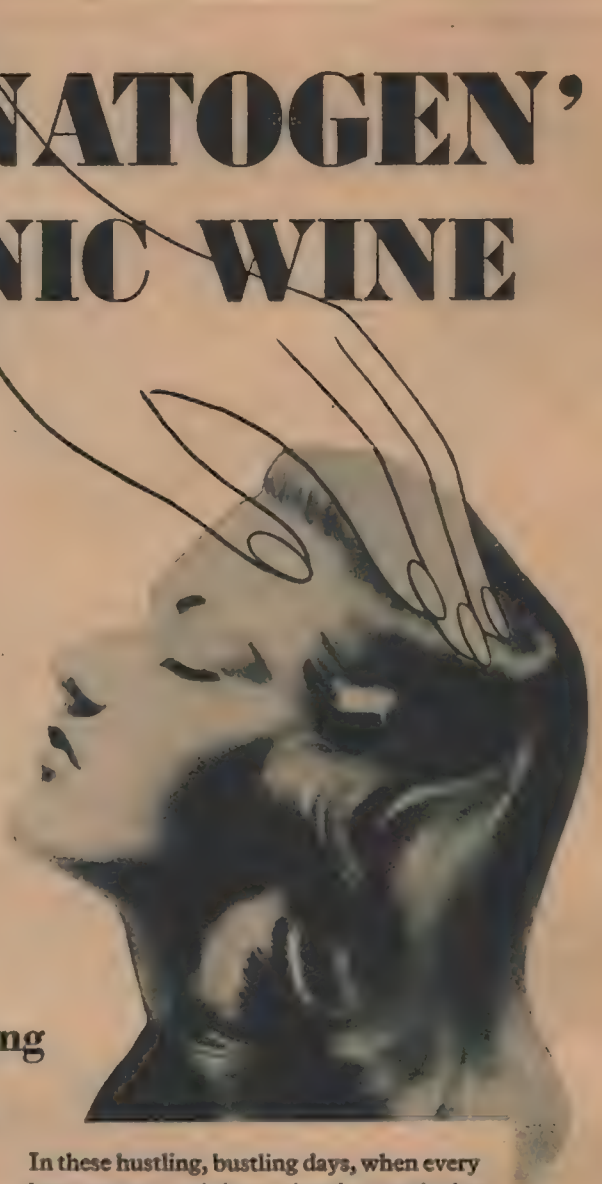

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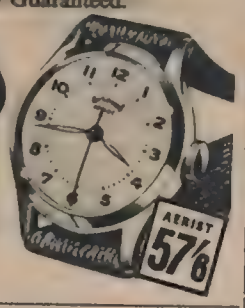

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RIGHT ON YOUR FLOOR

STEADY BARKER!

Continued from page 31

disappear, looking bored, or chat. The man with the astrakhan collar would turn his back and read *The Times*.

How they could be so blasé about an activity so exciting baffled me, as it did Bernard Miles. We would sit side by side as near the proceedings as we could, from the moment the rehearsal started until it finished.

One morning just before lunch, Charles Victor sent for us. He spoke to us sternly. "Mr. Prentice wants to see you in the Circle bar at 1.45 sharp. Don't be there at 1.46."

"What's it about?"

"You'll see," replied Charles brusquely, and was gone.

This was a bit disturbing, and neither Bernard nor I ate our sandwiches with as much relish as usual. It was even more disturbing for Bernard. His wife was expecting a baby, he confided, and financially he just couldn't wait for the play to start.

We were in the Circle bar at 1.30; fifteen minutes later Mr. Prentice came in with two bound parts of the play.

"There is a small, two-handed scene between two electricians in the film studio, which we cut out as it is extraneous to the whole," he explained, "but it could be quite amusing."

Charles Victor took the two parts reverently and handed us one each, as though they were scrolls of honour. In his eye was the glow of a father who sees his favourite sons approved.

BERNARD and I read our parts aloud. The scene ran about two minutes, and in it we both composed a love song in the middle of installing some new power points in the studio. Mr. Prentice showed no expression on his face whatever.

"We'll try it," he said. "We can always take it out."

Then came the dress rehearsal. It all depended on this as to whether the scene stayed in or not. For my birthday present my sister had bought me a spanking new make-up set, for which I was grateful. None the less it embarrassed me a trifle.

From surreptitious glances at the eleven companions in my dressing-room, it became painfully apparent that only beginners had spanking big make-up boxes.

The old hands kept a few dirty little stubs of greasepaint in scruffy cigar boxes. One of them actually made fun of my set. That settled it. They were envious of my speaking part, I decided, and I determined to use everything in the box, which certainly contained everything the budding actor was ever likely to use—crêpe hair of all kinds, sidewhiskers and even nose putty for false noses.

I still had my two walk-on parts as well as my speaking part, and I was determined to make my mark in all three.

For the scene in the hotel foyer, I had sidewhiskers, Spanish eyebrows, rings all over my hands, a caballero moustache and a somewhat incongruous imitation cairngorm fob.

For my part as one of the fourteen Warner brothers, I built up an elaborate false nose, and put on lots of wrinkles high-lighted. For my speaking part of the electrician which came third I found I had nothing much in hand. I had shot off all my big make-up guns already.

At the end of the dress rehearsal, I felt pretty confident. Bernard and I were preparing to leave when Charles Victor came up. It was late, very late. "Stay behind a moment, Barker," he said. "Mr. Prentice would like a word with you."

Jolly good, I thought. Probably the pains I had gone to with my make-up, on top of my keenness at rehearsals, had won his congratulations.

Mr. Prentice was looking a little weary, and for the moment, could not seem to recall what it was he had wanted me for. "Oh, yes," he said finally. "All that was pretty grim, wasn't it?"

I naturally thought that he meant the whole production, and hastened to put his mind at rest.

"It seemed jolly good to me, Mr. Prentice," I replied warmly. "It's such witty dialogue, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed it is. That is all the more reason why you should let it speak for itself and not try to embellish it with a lot of meaningless tricks of your own. That is the part I meant was grim."

I had a suspicion that he was being personal. "The two electricians?" I ventured a little worriedly.

"Not the *two* electricians, no," he replied gently. "I thought Bernard Miles was very good."

The whole position was now painfully clear. I determined to spike my own guns rather than let him overrun my position.

"I must be pretty raw," I said. "Would you like somebody else to play the part?"

"No," he replied, to my intense relief. "It's not as bad as that, but when a bad actor plays comedy he tries to show the audience how funny it is, whereas a good actor doesn't have to."

I crawled away. As I went down to the stage door, Charles Victor looked out of his private hutch. "Here, you!" he said. "Come in. Close the door."

There was just room to do as he said. He looked me up and down with a kind of deep-seated despair.

"What in hell's name did you think you were doing with your face?" he demanded.

"Pardon?"

"Was your make-up meant to be funny?"

"Funny?"

"In the hotel scene you looked like a Brazilian; and what was the idea of the Cyrano de Bergerac effort in the Warner brothers?"

I was speechless. I had fooled myself that as false noses went, mine had been a pippin.

"For God's sake," he pleaded, "be your age!"

The play ran its allotted three weeks.

ONE morning in the third week of the show, when we were thinking sadly of beginning to pack, a notice was put on the board telling everyone to be on stage half an hour before Curtain Up.

Emile's face was more bedimpled than ever. He looked positively cherubic. "We're going into Town," he said briefly, "to the Queen's Theatre."

I had a sneaking idea that actors in the West End got much larger salaries, so I queued up for my interview with Emile Littler with pleasurable anticipation. Mr. Littler lost no time in disillusioning me.

"I am prepared to pay you the same as you are getting here," he said, with an air of magnanimity.

The play went on. It was fairly well reviewed, and several confirmed first-nighters fell for it heavily, and used to come frequently.

Then business began to sag. It was

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"Follow that car!"

decided that the play might have a chance if a proven West End box office name were brought in. The only star immediately available was the great Edith Evans.

She had never played an American before, so first of all, with the dogged application for which she is known, she spent a couple of weeks learning American. Then she learned her part and arrived for her first rehearsal word perfect.

Her entrance was dramatic. She seemed apart from everyone, an ever-so-slightly-overplayed queen. Somebody was sawing wood high up in the flies, and sawdust would fall spasmodically, and an uncouth voice would shout across to the man who was producing sawdust the other side, but whereas the small-part people were slightly distracted, one even requesting the stage manager that the noise should be stopped, it appeared to have no effect upon Edith Evans at all.

Under a veritable snowstorm of sawdust, plain dust and occasional flakes of plaster, she sailed forward grandly like a barque under full canvas.

AFTER this, business perked up a little. Bernard and I continued to work up a few laughs out of our little scene until one day in the middle of it my eye roved to the side and there, wrapped in the tabs and watching with a cold, basilisk eye, was the great Miss Evans.

Our little scene came between two long ones of hers, and she usually retired to her suite. But tonight she was watching us. The next few times she watched us, too, and we almost went to pieces. What must she think of us hams?

We were not long left in doubt. Her dresser arrived at our dressing-room one day, presented Miss Evans's compliments and said she would be pleased if we would attend her dressing-room promptly at the fall of the First Act curtain. It was all very formal and frightening.

Miss Evans greeted us with an easy charm. "Please sit down," she said. "I have been watching your little scene these last few performances with great interest."

Miss Evans got straight down to it, and dropped the spacious manner a little. "I've been in the business a great many years, so I hope you won't be offended if I offer you a little advice."

We were almost too staggered by her generosity in showing any interest to do more than mumble our gratitude. Whereupon she proceeded firmly, critically and constructively to put us right.

She told us the lot. It was obvious that she just could not bear to see us doing it all wrong. It was typical of her that she should have bothered to give us the benefit of her immense experience, and in such a way as to encourage us enormously.

Gangrene set in. Business became bad, and we all had another interview with Emile Littler. He was a different man this time. Gone was the magnanimous manner in which he had scattered the largess of £3 a week.

We were all in the same boat. We were all troupers who had to pull together. That was the sign of the trouper. The upshot was that I left his office with a new agreement to accept £2 10s. a week.

I started to sell a few short stories and also sold my third book, *Day Gone By*, which wasn't a bad one. It was for me a happy summer. The money was beginning to trickle in. I had become an admirer at the shrine of a fair girl in the cast, and was rewarded by having my admiration welcomed.

I bought a new car, an Austin Seven —one of those wonderful old pram ones—and in the intervals of writing, and on non-matinée days, we would take picnics to romantic spots like the top of the South Downs.

Then, wonder of all wonders. Emile sent for me, and said he and Mr. Prentice so liked a play I had written, *Silent Moon*, that they were proposing to open the next season at Birmingham with it.

I was not quite twenty-one. I was a novelist, an actor, an author, and now a dramatist. I had health, a car, and a girl. Life was so sweet, it seemed that it could hold no more gifts for me.

Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!

Failure after success is the most bitter kind, and I took my first dose of it pretty badly. First I received a letter from the Arts Theatre saying that after all, they had decided not to do my satirical sketch. Never mind, I thought, that's trivial compared with the forthcoming production of my play at Birmingham.

On the very last day of the *Once In A Lifetime* show, when my turn came to be wished goodbye, Emile gave me one of his special, dimpled smiles and said: "By the way, I'm sorry to have to tell you after all this time, but we have decided after all not to risk putting your play on."

I HIT a bad patch. I failed to get another acting job and my stories did not sell. Then I had a chance meeting with my old school friend, Rupert Ingrams. I met him getting out of his own car, a most imposing sports coupé. Rupert looked magnificent. He had a long, dark coat of the Jack Buchanan, tight-waisted vintage, then the rage, and one of the new turned-up, black Anthony Eden hats.

Rupert greeted me with an easy grace and suggested that we went for lunch to Scott's; I had no alternative but to confess that I could not afford to go to Scott's, and that I was on a tough patch.

Rupert, on the other hand, told me as he led the way magnanimously into the nearest Lyons that things were looking up for him. He was under the wing of a new woman agent, called Madame Arcana, who had fixed him up

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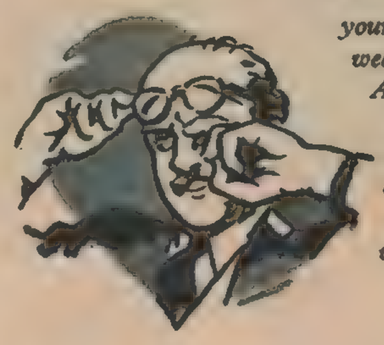

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with quite a few jobs, playing the piano here and there. Would I care to meet her?

The following afternoon she received me in an office in Mayfair about eight feet square. Had it been the reception salon of the Palace of Versailles, the regality of her manner would still have made it seem a small room. She was blessed then, as she is blessed now, with an unalterable conviction that she knew more about the theatre than anybody else, living or dead.

At the end of my audience with her, she picked up the telephone and asked for Mr. Van Damm of the Windmill Theatre. From the slight tightening of her lips, and the steely glint that appeared in her eyes, I sensed that Mr. Van Damm was proving elusive.

"Tell him Arcana wishes to speak to him," she said, and though I am pretty certain that the person the other end was none the wiser, the authority of her tone did the trick.

"I have an amazing young man here, Mr. Van Damm," she purred. "He does a wonderful act. He is the finest writer I've met for years. I think you should see him at tomorrow morning's audition, without fail."

Before I could raise a hand to stop her, that was that. The phone was replaced. She smiled and said: "Now it's up to you. I'll meet you at the stage door of the Windmill at ten."

She had never seen me act, she had read nothing I had written. Perhaps the sheer exuberance of youth, coupled with my aggressive ambition, made her take a chance.

"What audition can I give?" I pleaded. "I can't go along and act something from a play. I've never done anything on my own. In any case, what can you do on your own?"

"It's up to you as a writer to find the answer to that one before tomorrow morning," she replied. "Now you must go. I have a lot of telephoning to do."

I went back to the old homestead at Purley, shut myself away in my bedroom as usual, and willed myself into that distressing state, suspended between heaven and earth, which I can only describe as writer's contemplation.

My luck was in that evening. I hit on an idea that had never been done before. I did an act with a microphone, pretending that it was in a broadcasting studio and that I was interviewing various characters.

So many people have used this idea since that it seems impossible that anyone should have the effrontery to claim to have invented it, but I honestly believe it had never been done before.

Indeed, when I was called forth from the long queue the next morning on to the Windmill stage, I had to explain first to the outer darkness of the auditorium, where the invisible Mr. Van Damm sat holding the keys of my future, that I was supposed to have a microphone in front of me. There was not one in the theatre.

NERVOUSLY I raced through what I had scribbled the evening before. There was a heatwave in progress, and these interviews consisted mostly of finding out what the various characters thought about it.

Time had been too short to think out original characters, so I did impersonations of such people as Robertson Hare, Noël Coward and Ramsay MacDonald. This was lucky, because there were no impersonators going at that time, so this seemed to be something new, too.

I got half-way through my piece when the stage manager said, "Right, that's enough!"

Mr. Van Damm had come down to the footlights and called me over. "I'll take a chance," he said. "It's very raw, but it's different. I'll pay you more than you're worth. For five shows a day for three weeks, starting Monday, I'll pay you £4 a week."

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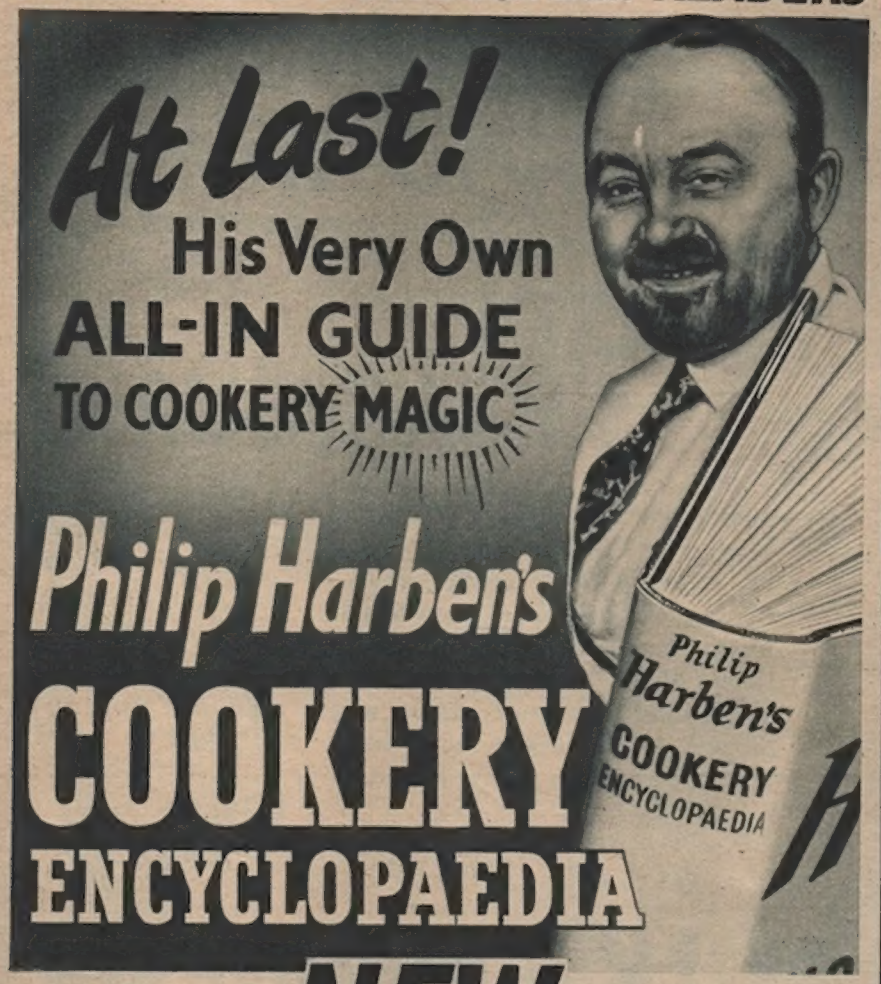

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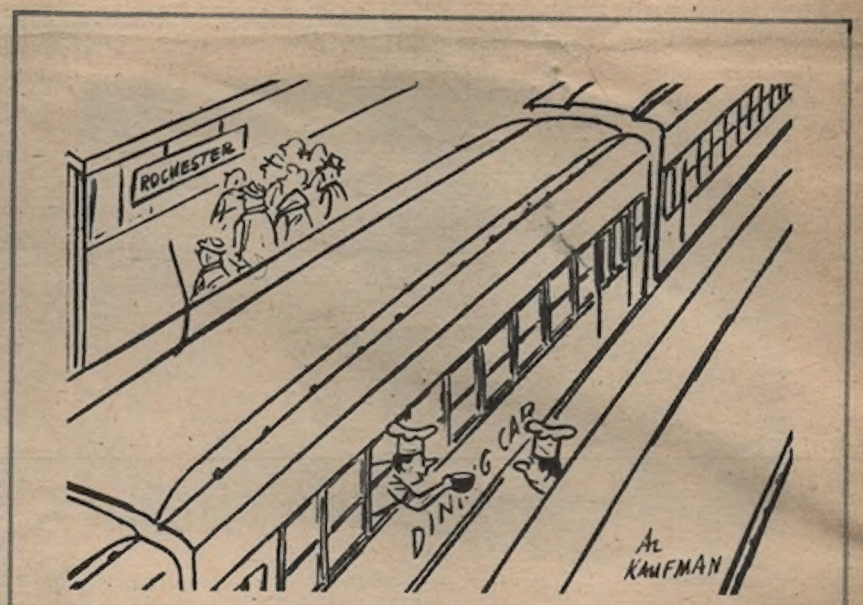

"Can I borrow a cup of sugar?"

£4. For some reason that now eludes me, I said I didn't want a contract, unless he wanted to give me one. I worked for him on and off for five years, and never did have a contract, and not once did I ever regret it.

As I turned from greedily accepting his offer of £4 a week, I almost bumped into Madame Arcana, who had gone out into the street and round to the stage door to break the good news to me that I was accepted.

"I know," I said. "Isn't it wonderful? Mr. Van Damm has just told me. He offered me £4 a week."

She seemed a little thoughtful. "And did you accept it?" she asked.

"Yes, of course," I said, and then, sensing something wrong, added, "Why?"

"He offered me to pay you five," she said sadly.

That's how I started at the Windmill at £4 a week.

WORKING hours at the Windmill are so long and arduous that it becomes a sealed-off world, like a boarding school, though less colourful in many ways. Vivian ruled it in my day like a fairly benevolent dictator. If you toadied to him, you ran the danger of being kicked around. If you stood your ground in an argument, he never used his power to penalize you.

The day of the show dawned. I suppose I had been half expecting a rather glamorous send-off, similar to the West End first night aura that had surrounded *Once In A Lifetime* when it arrived in Town.

The opening of the show was a scene that consisted largely of a girl in a mauve dress being given some yellow flowers. It was a sylvan scene, and it built to a climax with a troupe of dancing girls looking like furry bunnies coming on in a line and doing a routine of mixed tap and high kicks.

The first set of runner tabs closed and I was launched on London as a single act. The audience, I well recall, consisted of two men in the front row reading newspapers. They took one look at me and raised the newspapers high enough to cut me off from their line of vision.

I was to learn that this spot in the first house, which I was to occupy for some time, always drew this kind of audience. Quite often they would chat as well, and if someone had given someone else a particularly good lunch on the firm, they would pass audible comments on the performance. In my own case I never once heard one of an encouraging nature.

I was unprepared for this, with the result that I hurried and came off the stage at the end of three and a half minutes instead of my allotted five.

This caused chaos behind the scenes, as it took them more than four minutes to alter the scenery for the next item which, if my memory serves me aright, was a sort of Viennese affair to permit the troupe to come on and do what seemed to me the same tap and high kicking routine as in the first scene, except that they were now hussars.

Eve Bradfield, the producer, sent for me, and the lenses of her glasses shone with a militant light as she said: "Not good enough, old chap!" I thought for a dreadful second I was being paid off, then she set my mind at rest by saying: "We *must* have the full time for the scene change. Whatever the audience is, you must stay on your full time."

And so I always stayed on my full time, come rain, come storm. Once, feeling slightly ridiculous, I stayed on half a minute too long with no audience at all.

Then the evening houses came round. They were packed, and I had the satisfaction of hearing one or two unmistakable titters, and at the end a spatter of applause, which, of course, sounded to me like an ovation. I came back for another call, but the applause had gone and I was left standing there.

The next morning I wandered into Arcana's office, and her stately features were wreathed in benign smiles. I had got a lovely press. I was hailed as a new discovery. The next day the audience was quite enthusiastic, having been told by their papers that I was a discovery.

I gained a little confidence. But my future remained a problem. It was at the moment only assured for three weeks ahead to the tune of £12. Arcana tackled Vivian, who said he had already booked his next three-week show, but that I could come back after that. How to fill in those three weeks? Arcana settled the thing with a flourish of her telephone: "If Van Damm is so shortsighted that he won't pay you a retainer for the three weeks, we'll go elsewhere."

THE Prince of Wales Theatre had decided to turn to non-stop variety, too. With Arcana, I went along to see the theatre's partners, Messrs. Clore and Esdaile. For once I hardly said a word. Nor did anyone else, once Arcana got going. The partners uttered a few grunts and, still talking, my agent rose, signifying that the interview was ended, gathered me under her wing, and went. I was booked to open there with a new act the Monday after I finished at the Windmill, at £12 per week.

Arcana also arranged for me to write the lyrics for the show at the Prince of Wales, for which I would be paid a flat sum of £20. As if this were not enough good fortune for any one man to bear in one week, there was a telephone call from her while I was at the theatre.

"I've arranged another audition for you," she said casually, "in three weeks' time—at the B.B.C."

I had never even dared to think of the B.B.C.

NEXT WEEK: I run from romance—and get married

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On The Road Ahead
Christmas Is Near, So
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Went Wrong Somewhere
Those Roses
Burden Of Housework
Speed And More Speed
Down Below
Fuel For The Fire
At Her Mother's
Coughs, Sneezes And
Like A Princess
Not The Same
Without Discipline

Fido Growled, But
Spirited Away
Coming To Sleepytown

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Foretaste Of.....
All..... Now
Changing The.....
Feminine.....
.....In A Thousand
"That's A Nice.....!"

★Scrambled "Example"
HEMSADS
(2-Minute Teaser—rearrange letters to make extra one-word "Example")

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EX	6d.
B.	
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B.	
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2,013
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OTHER AWARDS: £10: Mrs. E. Clarke, 46 Millholme Avenue, Carlisle: THAT GERMAN SALESMAN—CAPTURING "TOYLAND" FOR DEUTSCHLAND. £9: D. Glasby, 5 Grove Coach Road, Retford: HALF-HEARTED PUSH — REVEALED "STAIRWAY"—THEN, *Slam*! £8: E. C. Riby, 6 Railway Cottages, Airmyn — Rawcliffe, Goole, Yorks: HUNGRY—THIRSTY, TIRED, SLIM—*Sane?* £7: T. Cassidy, 259 Pickhurst Rise, West Wickham: LAUGHING AT THE DIFFICULTIES—DOESN'T DAUNT *Mine*, UNHAPPILY! £6: C. E. Scott, 4 Flintham Drive, Sherwood: LAUGHING AT THE WARNINGS—TILL STETHOSCOPE "TICKLING RIBS." £5: A. Starks, 157 Wortley Road, Rotherham: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE—BUYING SONNY *Spacious* SUIT! £5: W. B. Whitaker, 18 Hillcrest Road, Barnstaple: WARNING TO BRITAIN —*Also*—HOOTER CALLING *Mother*!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see *"Bullets" Bulletin*. 30 Prizes of £1, 500 "Ten-Shots" and 1,000 "Good Shot" Awards have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in *"Bullets" Bulletin* dated December 3, and in JOHN BULL dated December 17), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and famliies) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, November 26, for early news of No. 2,013 result.)

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